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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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BURDENS FROM LAND.

NOW that agriculture appears to be once more looking up, it is to be hoped that some of our political friends will make a strenuous effort to get rid of some of the artificial obstacles to its prosperity. For many reasons this is a good time in which to attack the question. The political parties are not animated by the extreme bitterness which at times has rendered it impossible for them to combine for the settlement of difficult controversies. There is no need of imparting party feeling into it. The facts are so plain that men of both sides might freely combine to bring about a settlement. Take, for instance, the question of tithes. No one who is in the slightest degree acquainted with the subject would attempt to argue that their incidence is just or conducive to the welfare of husbandry. Indeed, the absurdities are so apparent that they will scarcely bear the test of serious statement. There cannot be living now many people who remember the days before 1837, when tithes were paid in kind and the parson's cart went round collecting each tenth sheaf of corn and tenth cock of hay, while the tithe pig was a synonym for the smallest in the litter. That, of course, was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. It was succeeded by the computation that took place in 1837, but at that time the stack-yard was the mainstay of the British farmer, and the arable land on which his cereals grew was the most valuable part of his holding. Naturally enough, then, the computers based their adjustment on the value per acre of the corn-lands. They actually assessed the tithe on each field separately, with consequences that are very curious to contemplate to-day.

If we take the corn-growing counties, Essex and Cambridgeshire, we shall find that the tithe there is, if not absolutely the highest, at least amongst the highest in England, while the rich

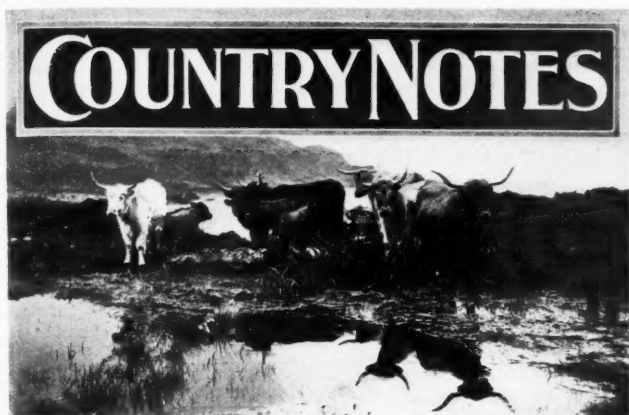
pasture-land of the North escapes most lightly. Now this was all very well as long as the farmer's income depended chiefly on wheat. Commissioners at the time tried their best to act justly. They did not fix an unchanging and absolute burden on the acres, but invented the septennial average as a means of adjusting the tithe to the fluctuating value of the land, an exceedingly fair arrangement as long as corn remained the staple. But the flux of time has brought about a complete change in this respect, owing to the vast importation of wheat that began in the late seventies and has been assuming more gigantic proportions ever since. English wheat-land has deteriorated in value, and in some places has gone entirely out of cultivation, because the returns from it could not be made equal to the expense of farming *plus* the tithe that had to be paid. On the other hand, grazing land has increased in value. Meat never came down in price to the extent that corn and flour did, and an entirely new and important trade has sprung up in the supply of milk to towns. In this way the farming interest has been revolutionised, and instead of wheat being the stand-by of the farmer, livestock has become so, livestock, of course, being used to include not only all beasts prepared for the butcher, but also those that are kept for dairy purposes. Now it is surely most absurd and ridiculous that the tithe on land which depends mostly on its grazing stock should be regulated not according to the rising and falling value of meat and milk, but according to the price of corn. Under any circumstances, this would be a most anomalous state of affairs, but it is rendered much more so by the fact that our harvests do not govern the price of cereals, but that the harvests of foreigners do so. Thus the chief burden paid by the English landed interest (we hold that whether the tenant or the landlord finds the money, the burden must ultimately fall on the land itself) is regulated by the plentifulness or scarcity of the crops in the United States of America, Canada, and Russia.

That anyone for a moment could make even a plausible defence of this system is incredible. We know very well that both parties have shirked dealing with it. Neither Whig nor Tory desires at the present moment to get rid of tithes. The Radicals at the time when they had a strong animus against the Church and made disestablishment a chief point in their programme, never dreamed of doing justice to the land by ridding it of these burdens. They rather wished to annex the tithes and apply them to secular purposes. The Conservatives, on the other hand, were very much afraid of raising the question, because an attempt to readjust tithes on a reasonable and just basis would probably bring about one of those agitations which have for their object the disestablishment of the Church. It is a case of suffering the ills we have lest a worse evil should befall. But it is not statesmanship and it is not wisdom. Sooner or later this question will have to be frankly and bravely faced.

Whatever the result may be in regard to the establishment or disestablishment of the Church, no man in any party can stand up and say that it is anything but most absurd and unjust that the burden on grazing land should be reckoned on a septennial average of the produce of arable land—that is to say, that the income derived from a dairy should be regulated by the price of corn, and that American corn. We are not here taking a part with one side or the other, nor even trying to form a side, but only protesting against a rank injustice, that is a notorious obstacle to land coming again into effective production. Of course, we know that the question stretches out miles and miles beyond the point we raise. At the time when tithes were first laid on, the income of the country rose completely from land, and a tax on land practically meant a tax on all the wealth of the country. But things have changed very much since then, and the great incomes are not now made from the land, but from commerce. It is no longer the landed magnate who holds sway, but the merchant prince, and if the Church were to be endowed really and truly by the nation, commerce and land would have to pay a fairly proportionate quota. However, it is of very little use trying to settle everything in a day. The politician who fixes upon this industry in regard to tithe and determines most resolutely to have the incidence readjusted, in harmony with the changes that have taken place in our sources of profit, will do a great work, and probably achieve a brilliant career. Here is something to be done, and what we want is the man to do it. Probably the best solution of the problem would be for tithes to be compulsorily bought out, as they are optionally now, and the revenue administered by a central body—Queen Anne's Bounty, for example.

Our Portrait Illustration.

A PICTURE of Mrs. Parnall, the wife of Captain Parnall of Ashburn, Fordingbridge, Hants, forms our frontispiece this week.



MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN made a most suggestive little speech the other night to a deputation who waited upon him to urge the necessity of establishing cable communication between the United Kingdom and the Faroe Islands and Iceland. The Postmaster-General said that no fewer than four systems of wireless telegraphy were now under the consideration of the Government, and he promised not to place any unnecessary restriction on the action of any one of them who cared to act upon a hint of Mr. Henniker Heaton to establish relations with the Faroe Islands. Mr. Chamberlain pointed out, however, that the Government is bound to be extremely cautious in dealing with this matter. Signor Marconi has produced an invention that will revolutionise our ideas of defence. A message could now be sent from our shores to any part of the Continent without a cable, and ships at sea could communicate with one another from a very great distance. Obviously this must lead to a readjustment of our means of defence. For the time being, we gather from Mr. Austen Chamberlain's speech that wireless telegraphy will not be permitted unless by the express sanction of the Government on British soil. It is impossible to restrain it, however, when carried on from a ship. The best policy of the Government would seem to be to find out which is the best of the four systems, and bring it into practical work as soon as possible.

It is seldom that a Blue Book contains anything so interesting as the report on the ape-like swamp-dwellers of New Guinea by the Acting Administrator. This strange race of human beings have dwelt in the swamps from times which antedate the oldest native traditions, and they are evidently on the high road to becoming a distinct variety of the animal known as *Homo sapiens*. They have lost three inches in stature, and, while retaining muscular arms and a robust trunk, have short and slender legs. Walking always in water or on moist ground, they have feet with long, fragile-looking toes, which they place on the ground "like wooden feet." Walking on hard ground makes these bleed, and, unlike the ordinary natives, whose skin is everywhere tight and smooth, the outline of their loins is obscured by folds of the skin. "More ape-like than any human being that I have seen," is the concluding criticism of the Acting Administrator. It is probable, of course, that this effort of Nature to create a new species of amphibious human being, with flat swimming and wading feet and degenerate physique, will be defeated by our civilising agencies. Fifty years hence the last recognisable specimens of this queer race will, perhaps, have encased their paddle-feet in boots—perhaps their women will be wearing high-heeled shoes. But the record of their existence is interesting.

The Amir of Afghanistan has passed a very self-denying ordinance. He has divorced all his wives except four, allowing them to re-marry at their pleasure, and informing them that those who do not marry will receive sufficient to support them for life. He has also proclaimed that in future his subjects must limit themselves to four wives, and if they exceed that number the surplus are to be divorced. Any breach of the Mahomedan law that occurs in the future is to be punished by death—and death means something serious in Afghanistan. Not long ago a man, supposed to have taken part in a religious dispute, was blown through a cannon, and the Amir vows that whosoever shall be convicted of a similar offence shall receive the same punishment. Four wives, however, form such a very liberal allowance, that we may be permitted to hope that none of the subjects of the Amir will incur the penalty of death. If they do, it will be difficult to find any pity for them.

The reform made by the Royal Academy was certainly called for. Henceforth no outsider is to be allowed to send in more than two pictures to the Selection Committee, and Academicians will be limited to eight instead of the nine that

they could send in before. The latter allowance will strike most people as still being ridiculously large. There is a tendency to paint on very large canvases, and eight of them from one man is at least twice as many as are required. About 13,000 pictures are sent in from the outside, and it is only possible to accept about 1,000 of them, which in most cases are probably no better than some of the 12,000 sent back. The limit of two, and no more, will have a wholly beneficial effect if it induces artists only to select their very best works for show at the Academy, and will add considerably to the variety and interest of the exhibition. But Academicians could probably be limited to four with advantage.

There has been a great deal of discussion during the past week about the action of Mr. Jones in refusing admission to Mr. Walkley, the dramatic critic of the *Times* to witness a first-night production. The general opinion is that the actor-manager showed quite a needless sensitiveness to criticism, and he has been not very wisely backed by Mr. Arthur Bouchier. On the whole it would be generally admitted that our leading newspaper has acted throughout with sense and dignity, though we question if Delany or others under the earlier régime of the "Thunderer" would have cared to enter into the correspondence which Mr. Moberly Bell has had with Mr. Bouchier, whose intervention has not redounded much to his reputation for tact or good sense. On the whole it is probable that Mr. Walkley has done better than anybody else out of the incident, because it must have had a high advertisement value for him.

It has been a question of some debate among members of clubs for many a long day whether a majority of a general meeting has the power to raise the subscription of its members; and it would seem as if the vexed question was set at rest once and for all by the decision of Mr. Justice Joyce in the case brought by Sir Richard Harrington against the Oxford and Cambridge Club. The judge distinctly has laid down the principle that there is no such power in a general meeting. Of course the subscriptions can be raised as high as the members please for those who join the club after such increase, but no increase can be put on the subscriptions of those who are already members beyond the rate at which they paid them on joining. To most people the decision is apt to come in the nature of a surprise, for although the right has often been questioned, any such protest has seldom taken practical shape, and the increase has usually, with much grumbling, been paid.

THE DYKE.

Blood-red, a giant of sun,
Rimming an inky bar;
Pale in the peace of twilight, one
Sciutillant silver star.
Cut from the cloud, a vapour curl
Crosses the last clear light;
Slowly the gold moon mellow pearl,
And the Down sinks into night.

EMILY HUGHES.

The lance has ceased to be a weapon of our cavalry, and presumably the designation of "Lancers" will survive only as a record of a state of things that has passed. Although the sword is to be retained, the pronouncement of the Commander-in-Chief clearly designates the carbine as the cavalry soldier's chief weapon. No doubt there will be some dissatisfaction among the "regular" cavalry at an alteration that seems to put them on much the same footing, if the term is admissible, as mounted infantry, but it is a change that the common-sense of the nation will welcome, as making for what we have learnt to deem efficiency.

The interesting discovery was made last season by Mr. Williams, the well-known Dublin naturalist, that the rare little red-necked phalarope nests in Ireland. The secluded and wild district which this little northern stranger has chosen has, for the best and most obvious reasons, been kept dark, but nevertheless there is no doubt that several pairs of these birds successfully hatched out their broods last season, and there is every reason to hope that they may do so again this spring. The only place in the British Isles where the red-necked phalarope was known to breed was Shetland and one of the Hebrides, but of late they have been getting fewer and fewer each year. The phalarope is supposed to be an Arctic region breeder, and it is strange that it should select such a mild southern venue as Ireland.

The devastation which the great storm of February 26th worked on the noble trees in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, was not confined to the park itself, but left its mark on the Zoological Gardens as well. Some of the houses suffered very much, but

especially those in which the eagles, vultures, etc., were kept. Many of these became total wrecks, and the occupants escaped. Strange to say, however, all the birds, with the exception of a black vulture, were recovered the next morning. A pair of eagles were recaptured in the grounds of the Viceregal Lodge, and a pair of vultures on the polo ground at the Nine Acres; and the others were found sheltering here and there about the gardens. All of them appeared quite bewildered, either by the storm or by the strange surroundings, and allowed themselves to be retaken without the least trouble. The lions were in a perfect panic during the storm, and it was some time before they settled down again. The wild boars, from Windsor Park, presented by the King, had a narrow escape, a large tree falling on and smashing in their house.

A curious application of brine baths is reported from Droitwich. Most of us know something of the excellent effect they have upon human beings who are afflicted with rheumatism, and it has been thought that horses could be treated in a similar manner. It is very certain that animals that have to stand about a great deal in all sorts of weathers, as those that drag the doctor's brougham or are taken out on a visiting tour, are subject to this complaint, and it seems very possible indeed that a brine bath might have a good effect upon them. At any rate, the experiment is well worth trying, as there are many of us who would very willingly undergo the expense of sending our favourite steeds to Droitwich, if by that means they could be saved from pain.

It is very pleasing to learn from a Norfolk correspondent that the green woodpecker has increased so much in numbers as to attract the attention even of people who do not usually pay a great deal of heed to such matters. This bird is one of the most beautiful of those indigenous to Great Britain, and it is extremely pleasing to see his green and yellow and gold flashing about the spring woods, though it is quite possible to hold two opinions about that wild cry of his, which has gained him the name of the yaffle. No doubt he has benefited largely from the extremely mild winters which we have had of recent years, and which have also allowed other delicate birds, such as the song-thrush, to increase their population, for a hard winter is more deadly in its effect than all the bird-catchers and bird-collectors in the universe. On the other hand, however, it is quite possible that the increase is at least due in part to the protection afforded by the various Acts, and to an increased love of wild birds among people, and a falling-off of the habit of birds'-nesting in boys.

SIC REQUIESCAM.

Take me, and put me when Fâie
On some lone hill, with all the sky
Above my grave; oh, let me be
On heights where every wind comes free,
And no one sleeps, but only I.
I would not have my grave dug deep,
But plant a wild red rose to heap
Its dying petals on my tomb.
Ah, in that little darkened room
Their scent should haunt me in my sleep.
I want to have the wide blue space
Of Heaven above my resting-place:
I want the dews, and dreams, and flowers,
Around my everlasting hours,
And just the green turf on my face.

R. G. T. COVENTRY.

Travelling by motor on the Continent, one cannot but be struck by the constantly increasing appreciation that all the domestic animals seem to be showing of the nature of the motor-car and the unpleasant consequences of getting in its way. In many parts of France the roads are very apt to be littered and strewn with cows, pigs, donkeys, goats, and poultry in a degree scarcely known with us; and many of these poor things, to say nothing of dogs innumerable, have fallen victims to their ignorance of the meaning of a motor, and to their inability to judge the pace of a thing moving towards them without the noisy assistance of a prancing horse. But now, at the first panting sound of the distant motor, you may see a general stampede from the dangerous parts of the roads into the generally wide sideways. Both for the sake of the poor things themselves, of their owners, and of the motorists, it is good to find this increasing intelligence; and it is to be hoped that our own domestic animals, such as the poultry that most commonly fall victims, will become equally instructed. It is always to be admitted, however, that our roads are not planned with quite the generous breadth of mind and space shown by the French road-makers.

Trout-fishing promises to be very early and unusually good. On most rivers the season opens in March, and both in the North and in Devonshire the fish have for some weeks been

getting rapidly into condition, owing to the wonderfully mild weather of February. They were rising freely on many days during that month, and insect food is more plentiful now than it often is at the beginning of April. In the North the big rains and floods have thoroughly scoured the river-beds, which does good by cleansing the deeper pools and exposing fresh ground to food-producing influences. Spring salmon have also had a splendid chance to run up to the higher waters. April is often a month of low water, after the droughts of March, but this year there is every prospect of the streams being higher than usual, and of fish being in the humour to take the fly.

The herring ought to be much complimented by the attention paid him. The engines for his taking constantly advance in their efficiency, and all the ingenuity of man is expended on them. It is comparatively lately that steam has superseded sailing as the means of herring taking, and now paraffin is to be tried, experimentally as it is stated, but we may suppose that its use to these ends is not so novel as to be doubtful. These successive improvements form an instructive comment on the assertion freely made not many years ago that the herring was being exterminated off our shores. At that time the numbers of these fish did seem wonderfully diminished, but the present condition of affairs, when they have become so plentiful again as to justify a constant advance in their means of capture, is proof of the better judgment of those who maintain that the migrations of fishes are subject to influences which we have not yet understood, and that the scarcity of the herring was only temporary.

A striking, but unfortunate, instance of the apparently capricious movements of sea-fish is being furnished just now by the sardines, which continue to avoid the coasts of France that habitually they love to frequent, and not only the northern part of that western coast where we hear most of the distress that their absence is causing to the fisher people, but all the way down right through to Spain.

The southern fishers, such as the Basques, are not suffering to anything like the extent of the Bretons, because they are a better-to-do folk, and are not by any means so solely dependent on the fisheries for their livelihood. They are considerable peasant proprietors also. But they, too, in some degree have felt the pinch; and their curious "mystery" play of the interment of the sardine in Passion Week—a kind of thanksgiving, as it seems, for the harvest of the sea—will have some element of irony about it in this year of little grace for them.

Spring in the South of France is by no means so forward relatively as in our country. Although the weather has been unusually fine and warm and delightful, it has been remarkably dry, so that the flora has not had anything like the encouragement to early and premature growth that it has received at home.

They have a diabolical habit in some of the seaports and villages of France and elsewhere on the Continent of catching unfortunate seagulls by angling for them with a rod and line and fish-hook baited with a sand-eel or any other of the delicacies that this beautiful and useful, though not very daintily feeding, bird affects. Although it is a form of sport or industry that is carried on more often and more openly on the Continent, where legislation does not interfere with it, it is not unknown in some of our British seaside places, where, seeing that the law has the power to prevent it by the punishment of the participators, it is the plain duty of everyone who witnesses it to put a stop to such cruelty. The seagulls are almost pathetically tame and confiding, and the survivors are wholly undeterred by the sight of their captured friends put away into hampers, presumably to be kept or sold as pets, while the more severely injured ones are killed outright, to be sold to the makers of ladies' hats or hat-trimmings. Both at home and abroad it is possible for ladies to discourage the cruel practice by declining to wear such adornments as the plumage of these harmless birds.

It is of course far too early to prophesy with even a moderate degree of assurance, but so far as we can see the prospects of the deer forests for next season are good. The winter has been very favourable, and little or no feeding has been necessary even on forests where it is the general rule that deer should be fed in winter. What is no less important, the present signs point to an early and plentiful growth of pasture. The grouse, too, have been getting through the winter well, and the stock that was left was generally far better than the first few days and weeks of the shooting season had led most of us to expect that it could be; so, on the whole, such premature forecasts as we cannot refrain from making are justified in a guarded optimism.

GRAND MILITARY MEETING.

SANDOWN PARK is one of the most picturesque race-courses in England, or one might almost say in the world, and being within a reasonable driving distance of town, it is on all occasions well patronised by the *élite* of London society, so that nearly every race-meeting held there proves a social success. When we have, in addition, the support of the military, the scene is indeed a brilliant one. Last Friday everything seemed to combine to ensure a most enjoyable race-meeting. His Majesty rode down in a motor-car to see his horse, Ambush II., run in the great race of the day, the Grand Military Gold Cup, and the crowd of sportsmen and ladies ready to greet him in the most enthusiastic manner formed a most delightful and vivacious picture on the brilliant greensward with a background of dark pines on the top of the hill. The weather was propitious, and the course was in good condition, although it had not quite recovered from the soaking of the previous day. All that was lacking was that most necessary item in a really good day's racing—a reasonable number of good horses to compete against each other; not that there was any falling off in the number of horses entered, but the fields for most of the events were lamentably small. The great race of the day, the



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AMBUSH II. GOING OUT.

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Grand Military Gold Cup, only brought out four, and among them there was not any of conspicuous merit. It had been known for some time that the King's horse, Ambush II., was a doubtful quantity, and he certainly did not look in condition to cover the three miles at a winning pace; nevertheless, he was made favourite, probably more on account of his former performances and faith in his Royal owner than for any merit in himself, for your betting man is nothing if not conservative. In any case, he in no way justified the confidence placed in him. His stable companion, Major E.

Loder's Marpessa, carrying the same weight, won with the most consummate ease, leading the field from start to finish, and the King's horse could only make a bad third to Lord Dalhousie's Gangbridge. On this form Ambush II. seems to stand very little chance of distinguishing himself at Liverpool; but, of course, three weeks may make all the difference in the world, and there is no race which affords more surprises than the Grand National. The winner, Major Eustace Loder's Marpessa, looked much more fit to cover the course at Liverpool, for he is a great, good-looking horse, with a fine, free action, and takes his jumps in a most workmanlike manner; but it must be confessed that on Friday last he met nothing to test his ability to win the



W. A. Rouch.

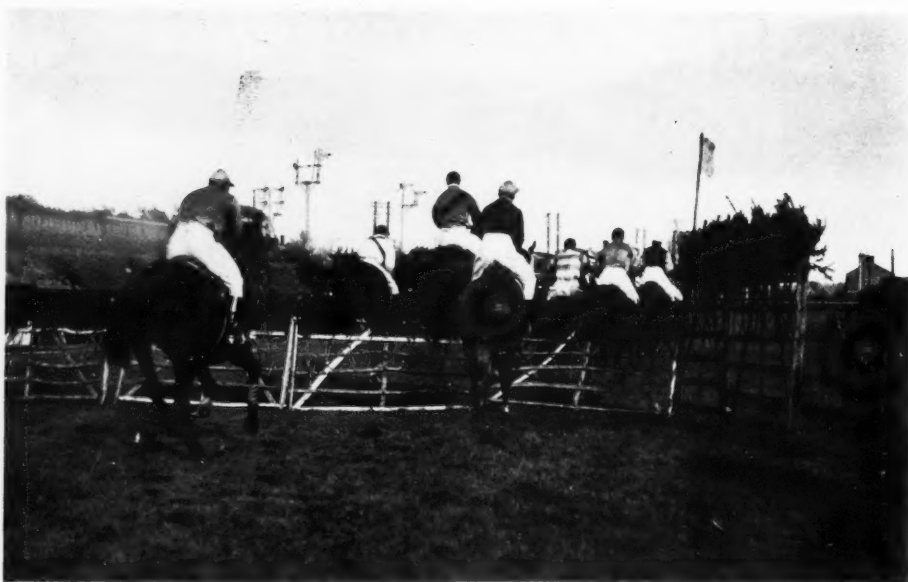
MARPESSA AND GANGBRIDGE.

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Grand National. Gangbridge, who finished second, was dead lame when he pulled up, and the running of Ambush II. was such as to make a comparison impossible, while the only other horse in the race, Colonel Wing's Everton, died from his exertions. This had quite a pathetic side to it, for the old horse was a great favourite, and would follow his master about like a dog.

The other events on the card for Friday were of very little interest, and the sport was in no way equal to what we remember of former Grand Military Meetings. Of the four races confined to the Services, the largest number of horses that went to the post was eight for the newly-created Imperial Service Cup, which was won by Major A. C. Daly's The Ewe Lamb with Captain Collis up. Mr. Rasbotham steered Major J. D. Edwards's Rathcannon to victory in the Past and Present Steeplechase, beating the favourite, Captain M. Hughes's Band of Hope, by a neck. In the Maiden Steeplechase Mr. Rasbotham was again successful, riding Major Sellar's Hungarian, who led all the way and won easily from a field of four very indifferent performers.

On Saturday there was a sad difference in the weather. The soft air and brilliant sunshine of the day before had brought out a gay throng, the scene being enlivened by the spring costumes of an unusually large number of ladies; but on the concluding day of the meeting what a change was there! A strong north-westerly wind, with driving alternate showers of rain and hail, deterred many from venturing out at all, and those who faced the elements had donned their winter garb again, so that the grand stand and paddock wore that sombre air to which we are more accustomed at meetings over the sticks. The course was sodden with the overnight rain; but notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the sport, if below the average, was distinctly more than equal to that of the previous day. The race in which most interest centred was of course the Grand Military Handicap Steeplechase, and, greatly to the disappointment of many, neither Marpessa nor Gangbridge took part in it, so that the race lay



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A HURDLE RACE.

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Mr. T. Southall's Papdale in the March Open Handicap; and the Duke of Westminster's Drumree, ridden by his owner, in the National Hunt Flat Race. The victory of the latter was exceedingly popular, for the racing public dearly love to see an owner of a good horse who can prove himself a practical sportsman; and, indeed, the Military Meeting, if it was not a complete success in every way, has at least shown us that amateur riders can at least hold their own with professional jockeys when the weights are not prohibitive. The greatest honours fell to Mr. Rasbotham, who during the two days rode four winners, and with his pluck, dash, and complete mastery of the art of horsemanship this young amateur promises to add one more to the long list of brilliant riders who have upheld the credit of the Army as a training ground for good sportsmen. Captain Collis also had his ovation when he rode his own horse past the post in the Grand Military Handicap Steeplechase, and on the previous day when he won the Imperial Service Cup on The Ewe Lamb. Captain the Hon. Reginald Ward was also received with enthusiasm, although he

was not so pre-eminently successful on this occasion as he has been in the past—luck seemed to be a little bit against him; but even the most finished horseman cannot always win. In any case, it is all for the good of steeplechasing that owners should ride their own horses, and when that is not possible, that the mount should be given to a friend, or, failing that, to a gentleman rider. It enhances the sport immensely, and, besides, it is the very best guarantee that the traditional purity of the English Turf shall be maintained. Anything which can possibly help to raise the standard of the so-called illegitimate sport to the level at which it once stood, cannot fail to be appreciated by sportsmen of all classes, and as the powers that be seem to be in no way anxious to bestir themselves, it is well that reform should come from without, if it is correct to say that the owners of race-horses and their friends who ride can in any way be described as beyond the pale. There can be no doubt that there is a very



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THE CROWD ON THE CLUB LAWN.

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between Prince Talleyrand, ridden by his owner, Captain Collis, and Lieutenant-Colonel Fowles's Brown Study. The former, after a most exciting race, won with something in hand, Brown Study coming in second. The other successful candidates were Mr. T. Southall's Canderos in the Open Selling Handicap Hurdle Race; Major Edwards's Shaun Abou in the United Service Steeplechase; Mr. H. E. Dexter's Karnak in the Selling Handicap Steeplechase;

general desire to see some of the National Hunt rules revised, and there seems to be more hope that this desirable consummation may be brought about if amateur riding again becomes fashionable. It would also tend towards the decrease of gambling on paper form, which is one of the greatest curses of modern racing. Next year, when those who have just returned from fighting their country's battles have had time to look

round for really good chasers, perhaps we may see some superior animals competing in the Grand Military. In any case, everyone must welcome the revival of the meeting, though some familiar faces were sadly missed, both in the paddock and in the pigskin.



SAD to relate, there is, as a rule, something approaching to sameness and monotony about books of travel, varied sometimes by the expression on the part of the traveller of his own crude views upon subjects of which other and wiser men have made a special study. Rarely, indeed, is there so brilliant an exception to the rule, or a book of travel which contains so much that is new and interesting, as *In the Andamans and Nicobars*, by Mr. C. Boden Kloss (Murray). Mr. Kloss has not, indeed, discovered these interesting groups of islands, for there is little doubt that they were included in the world known to the ancients, and Ptolemy wrote of them before Marco Polo flourished and romanced, or Master Cæsar Fredrike visited the Eastern Seas. Moreover, the Andamans are an Indian convict settlement at which the great and ill-fated Lord Mayo met his death at the hand of an Indian convict. But if Mr. Kloss could not discover the islands, since their existence was well known, he could prove himself to be a close and intelligent observer of men and birds and beasts, to say nothing of the vegetable kingdom, and his record of novelties is a wonderful one for these days of the rapidly contracting area of exploration. Landing now and again from the good ship Terrapin, a Singapore teak-built schooner yacht of but forty-six tons register, he claims to have discovered no less than sixteen mammals new to the islands and "ten hitherto undescribed species of birds." Of all these specimens, as well as a large number of ethnological curiosities, have gone to the National Museum at Washington, U.S.A., which Englishmen may be suffered to regret, not only because the Andamans are ours, but also because a certificate of novelty emanating from South Kensington would be of real value.

The discoveries in natural history are not, perhaps, of the highest order of interest. Bats and rats seem to carry all things before them in these islands, and there is a conspicuous absence of ungulates, carnivora, squirrels, and even flying lemurs, which are common on the more or less adjacent mainlands. Such other mammals as are to be found (pigs, for example, which have assumed more or less distinct forms) have in all probability been introduced by human means. Hence, taking into consideration the fact that both groups are well suited to maintain mammals, and that they are surrounded by deep water, Mr. Kloss agrees with Hume and Dr. Russell Wallace in thinking that if they were ever connected with any mainland, the connection was dissolved incalculably long ago. One third of the birds, too, excluding waders and swimmers, are peculiar to the islands, and such relationship as they seem to possess with Continental birds points to closer intercourse with India than with either Malaysia or Burmah. The most interesting of them are the megapodes, or mound-birds, which, outside Australasia, are found only in the Philippine and North-West Borneo islands, and in the Nicobars. In fact, these megapodes, barely distinct from those of New Guinea, are found separated by 1,800 miles (including a number of islands bare of megapodes) from their nearest congeners. The inference, drawn by Dr. Russell from Dr. Guillemard's statement that the megapodes are often domesticated by the Malays, is irresistible. The Malays, who have had a great deal of intercourse with these islands at one time or another, introduced these strange birds, which thrived and multiplied in a congenial climate. For me, I confess, these weird fowls, *bona-fide* builders of hotbeds for the hatching of their eggs, have always had a remarkable fascination.

Be it added, before going further, that Mr. Kloss gives some practical advice to collectors, of which the main points are that cartridges containing shot of all sorts of sizes should be carried in cases of obviously distinct character, by which errors may be minimised, though they must occur sometimes; that weapons of microscopical calibre should be carried for the rare and small birds; and that there is no sort of use in trying flying shots in the luxuriant jungle. You may kill your bird so, but you will not easily gather him when killed. Traps for the minor mammals were a large and useful part of the equipment. I could, however, find it in my heart to regret that the collector should have recommended, with the qualification that the action is callous and cold, the use of the screams of a wounded parrot

to attract others of his companions within range. Candour compels the confession that the device has been recommended to me by an English gamekeeper in the case of green plovers; but it is a cruel trick, all the same.

Apart from the natural history of birds and beasts, we have, in the case of the Andamanese in particular, some very interesting facts in the natural history of man, which it sounds learned to call anthropology. Marco Polo wrote: "All the men of this island have heads like dogs, and teeth and eyes likewise; in fact, in face they are just like big mastiff dogs." That, as Huckleberry Finn would have said, was a stretcher, for the Andamanese have not changed, so far as one can tell, from the beginning of time, and, although distinctly under-sized (the average men are 4ft. 10½in. high), they are not ugly. Neither are there any traces of cannibalism amongst them, although that, too, was ascribed to them by Marco Polo. The truth, which never worried Marco Polo to speak of, is that, if the Nicobarese are a mixed people, "the Andaman Islands are inhabited by people of pure Negrito blood, members of perhaps the most ancient race remaining on the earth, and standing closest to the primitive human type." This is abundantly proved by their kitchen middens, going back probably to the Pleistocene, and certainly beginning not later than the Neolithic period, which contain objects almost identical with those found in the Danish middens, celts, arrow-heads, and the like, of Tertiary sandstone. "It would be impossible to find anywhere a race of purer descent than the Andamanese, for, ever since they peopled the islands in the Stone Age, they have remained secluded from the outer world, and to this isolation is due the uniformity in their physical and mental characteristics."

So we have men of the Stone Age, after centuries of inbreeding, surviving into the twentieth century, content, until quite recently at any rate, to use implements and weapons of stone and wood and shell. Why should they not be so content in a land where clothes are worse than a superfluity, and their food is ready to their hands on all sides? Who, indeed, can deny that, in the absence of the unrest inspired by a trained intelligence, the lot of the Andamanese philosopher is not altogether to be despised? Physiologically they are an interesting people, too. If their abdomens, like those of most savages, are protuberant, their very dark faces are not unpleasant, and their ears are more refined than those of many an Englishman. Some, too, show the great toes of their large feet placed thumbwise, like to those of an ape. Save in the matter of breadth they can hardly be accused of negroesque noses, their foreheads are good, and their lips are rarely thick. They are said to be childish, but bright and merry, quick in temper, wanting in perseverance, kind to their women-folk, and very affectionate to their children. In fact, they are a nice little people and a harmless—survivors of the childhood of mankind. Education, as might have been expected, has proved a failure and a mischief in the case of these children of Nature. At a school started at Port Blair it was found that, while the children learned well enough up to a point, they stopped dead at that point; moreover, they grew fatter and more indolent than ever. Their morals have suffered not a little by intercourse with the convicts, which is a pity, because, as savages go, they are a naturally moral people. It had been better by far to leave them in their primitive state, able to count two only, save by added signs, and even ignorant of the method of producing fire by artificial means. In that state they were at least happy and harmless. Their country, as the numerous photographs and descriptions plainly prove, is about as near to the conditions of the Garden of Eden as anything in this world, and no stranger has ever brought them anything but trouble. Even now they thrive in proportion to their avoidance of what we call civilisation, which is a sorry commentary on the institution itself. To it, also, they owe most of their worst diseases, and their consequently very brief lives. Assuredly they are entitled to our sympathy.

CYGNUS.



TREES AND SHRUBS FOR SWAMPY SOILS.

IT is not generally known that many trees and shrubs are not only most beautiful in swampy places, but grow best in such positions. Many a dismal swampy waste might be beautified with trees and shrubs of warm colouring from bark or stem, and of these perhaps the willows in their several varieties are the best known. Here the beautiful *Salix britzensis* and the Golden Willow and Cardinal Dogwood give wonderful effects. A large mass of *Cornus sibirica* has a crimson glow in the cool light of a winter day, and it is strange that it is not planted more freely for this purpose. Make groups, too, of the Sweet Gale (*Myrica Gale*), of the beautiful native Sea Buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*),

and remember to plant one male to every six female plants; and it is in such a place as this that the Guelder Rose (*Viburnum Opulus*) is most happy. It has masses of red berries, and the colouring of the leaves is very rich. In a sheltered place—we mean sheltered from north-east winds—Bamboos can be planted. Choose at first only well-trying kinds, such as the well-known *Arundinaria japonica* (*Bambusa Metake*), *A. palmata*, and such graceful forms as *Phyllostachys viridi-glaucescens* and *P. mitis*.

SNOW AND PROTECTION.

Snow is a blessing to many plants. The soft covering may weigh down tree and shrub branches almost to breaking-point, but the careful gardener will relieve this burden by shaking off a fall of sufficient severity to damage a valuable arborescence. Snow is of inestimable value to many low-growing plants from the Alps and even low-lying districts. In the Alps and other mountainous regions alpine plants are sheltered during winter by a covering of snow, and not until spring dawns does this protection melt away to let the mountain flowers burst into leaf and blossom. We wish the same conditions prevailed at home. It is neither snow nor frost that plays havoc with alpinists, but wet, muggy weather, when they, perplexed by the nature of the season, are unaware whether it is the right thing to grow or to remain stationary. Besides alpine plants, however, many other things receive benefit from a covering of snow. It is an excellent protection for dwarf Roses which have been budded the previous season, and it gives the same assistance to young *Rhododendrons*, *conifers*, *Hollies*, etc., which are just passing through their first winter out of doors. Under the snow they are safe from cold drying winds and a thermometer below zero. It is zero without the snow that troubles the life of the plant. A foot of snow is equal to a rainfall of in., and on many soils the snow is of greater value, as the moisture sinks in and gets to the roots of the plants.

THE CORNELIAN CHERRY (*CORNUS MAS*)—A FEBRUARY-FLOWERING TREE.

Though the *Cornus* family is extensive, there are not many members remarkable for the beauty of their flowers, as what is known as the flowering Dogwood of North America (*Cornus florida*), and the Himalayan *C. capitata* (*Benthamia fragifera*), as well as the Japanese *C. Kousa* (*Benthamia japonica*), have clusters of comparatively insignificant flowers, surrounded by large petal-like bracts, which make up for actual flower deficiency. *Cornus Mas*, which flowers in the latter part of January and in February, differs greatly in general appearance from any of these. It forms a low-growing tree, seldom more than 10ft. to 12ft. high, while the small bright yellow flowers are borne in dense clusters on the leafless shoots. Owing to this they are conspicuous, particularly if there is a background of some dark-leaved evergreen. The popular name of Cornelian Cherry is derived from its bright red Cherry-like fruits, which are, however, seldom produced in quantity in this country. Several species of *Cornus* are represented by variegated forms, and this is no exception to the rule, as there are variegata, in which the small ovate leaves are variegated with white, and elegantissima aurea, with leaves having a central blotch of yellowish green with a broad golden margin, which, under the influence of sunshine, becomes suffused with red.

PROPAGATING LOBELIA SPECIOSA.

Where this popular little flower is required in quantity no time should be lost in propagating it either from seed or by cuttings, as in either way it is easily managed. On cold soils and in wet localities it does not flower so profusely from seed as when grown from cuttings. Plants that were taken up early in the autumn, potted carefully, and kept near the glass, will now give cuttings in great quantity, and where a little bottom heat is at command they will quickly strike. To raise the plants from seed is a simpler matter, and if the seed has been carefully selected the plants will be tolerably uniform in character. Sow the seed in pans or boxes of fine rich sandy soil, covering it with a dusting of peat or finely-sifted leaf-mould. Cover with glass and shade with paper placed on the pans or boxes in a newly-started vinery or in a frame with a nice brisk heat. Be careful not to over-water, for more seeds are lost through this than from any other cause.

ROSES AND PANSIES.

We have received several letters asking for information about the way to plant Roses with Pansies. Of course, the first point is to have a true association of colour. Roses with flowers of clear pink colouring like Captain Christy, or palest pink like Viscountess Folkestone, should go with white or only the faintest of pale lavenders; white Roses with Pansies of pale yellow, lilac, purple, or blue; red Roses, such as the Duke of Edinburgh, with yellow or white Pansies; and pale yellow Roses with white, yellow, or any lilac or purple Pansy. The salmon-red and salmon-pink Roses, some of which are most beautiful in themselves, are the least suited for association with Pansies, though white and the very palest yellow Pansies will go well with almost any flowers. In spring all flowers are so welcome that one is glad to have beds of Pansies, though as a rule they are better for use as edgings—not formal edgings, but in informal in-and-out edgings to beds and borders of shrubs or other plants. Unlike the greater number of our garden flowers, which gain by association and massing, in the case of the Pansy each little face-like flower is in itself so charming and interesting that one wishes to treat them as individuals rather than as atoms in a conglomerate. That is why, though they can also be used as colour-masses, it is desirable to have them in edgings. They are also

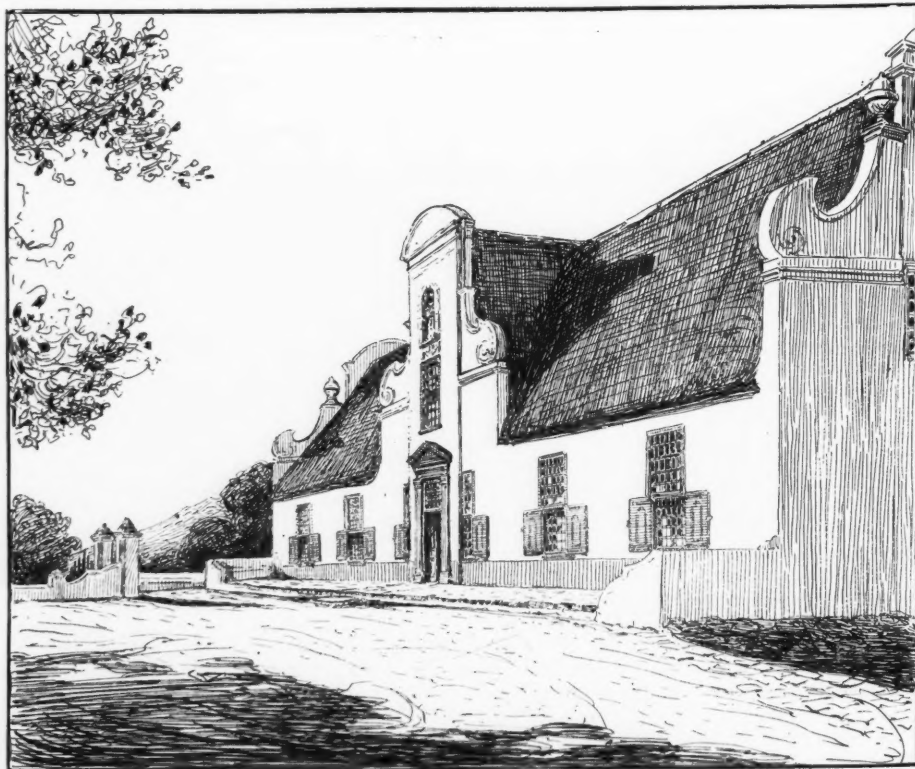
delightful in a Dutch kind of garden, where they would be in long narrow beds that would hold not more than three rows of plants.

WORK IN THE GARDEN.

This is so busy a season of the year that we must draw attention to a few of the most important details that must not be forgotten if a bright summer flower garden is desired. Rose planting may be continued, and even in early April. It is not an ideal season, but many Roses are more successful when planted in spring than in the best season for most varieties—namely, November. We planted many Roses last March, and after the planting were uncomfortable about their welfare, for the good reason that twenty-one degrees of frost were registered for nearly a week. The Roses, however, came safely through, and flowered abundantly in the following late summer and autumn. We have never had such flowers of Caroline Testout and Marie van Houtte. Trees and shrubs may also be still planted. Seed sowing should be in full swing, both of flowers and vegetables. Remember our oft-repeated advice and sow thinly, not in patches, but thinly, and then thinning the seedlings where they are too thick. Unless an annual has sufficient space it cannot grow to its natural size, but becomes weak and the flowers are few and quickly over. Carnations and Pinks may also be planted; in fact, for the former, we prefer the month of March, but beware of wireworm, which is a terrible foe. Of Pinks, there is no more welcome flower throughout the year than the deliciously sweet white variety. Though it is in most gardens, it is not nearly enough used. Because it is a useful plant is no reason why it should not be also in the rock garden or rock wall, where it is absolutely in place. In rocky rifts, or crowning stony masses, or nestling at the rock foot, its sun-baked fragrance, here and elsewhere, is one of the many charms of early June. No flowering plant is better as a garden edging, and it should not be forgotten how excellent are its tufts of foliage in winter, for then does it appear to be in perfection. Pansies, tufted and otherwise, may also be planted at this season, and they will flower in summer and until the autumn if spent flowers and seed-pods are removed. Unless this is done the plants are quickly over, the growth gets ragged, and weeks of flower beauty are lost through want of a little timely attention. It is wise to protect certain plants. *Lilium giganteum*, for example, should be sheltered from rough winds and frosts by Bracken Fern or some simple covering.

OLD CAPE COLONY.—II.

THERE is outside Cape Town a pine-bordered road, dusty with soft red dust, as romantic a highway as you could wish. You will find it past Newlands, once the Newlands reclaimed from the mountain-side, or through Wynberg, the old Wine Mountain of the early settlers. It leads you, rather breathless if you have come up the hill on a bicycle, to the vineyards of Groot Constantia. Constantia wine had once a world-wide fame. The old farm account books showed great export to England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the Cape it cost two Spanish dollars or eleven shillings and sixpence a bottle, and was not given lightly to every guest, says a traveller, but to a rich visitor from whom benefits were expected. You may remember that the broken-hearted Marianne Dashwood of Miss Austen's "Sense and



GROOT CONSTANTIA, BUILT BY VAN DER STEL, 1685.



SIDE GABLES AT GROOT CONSTANTIA.

Sensibility," was comforted by a "glass of the finest Constantia wine that ever was tasted." March of time has transformed the place into a Government wine farm, worked by convict labour. The formal garden and the carved wine vats have disappeared. The beauty of the spot can hardly alter. Few of the many visitors to Constantia trouble their heads about the man who planned, more than 200 years ago, to make a home on the mountain slopes, who cleared a space for his vines and his gabled house amongst the wild geraniums, the gladioli, and the lilies. Yet what a place it is to dream in! Below, to the south-east, lies False Bay and the wonderful brilliance of its sandy shores. Behind is the steep pass of the "Nek" and the rocky heights above Hout Bay, whence, on a still afternoon, you may hear the hoarse bark of some adventurous baboon; great oak trees throw their blue shadows on the flat sunlit walls. But properly to appreciate it you should know the fascinating story of the van der Stels.

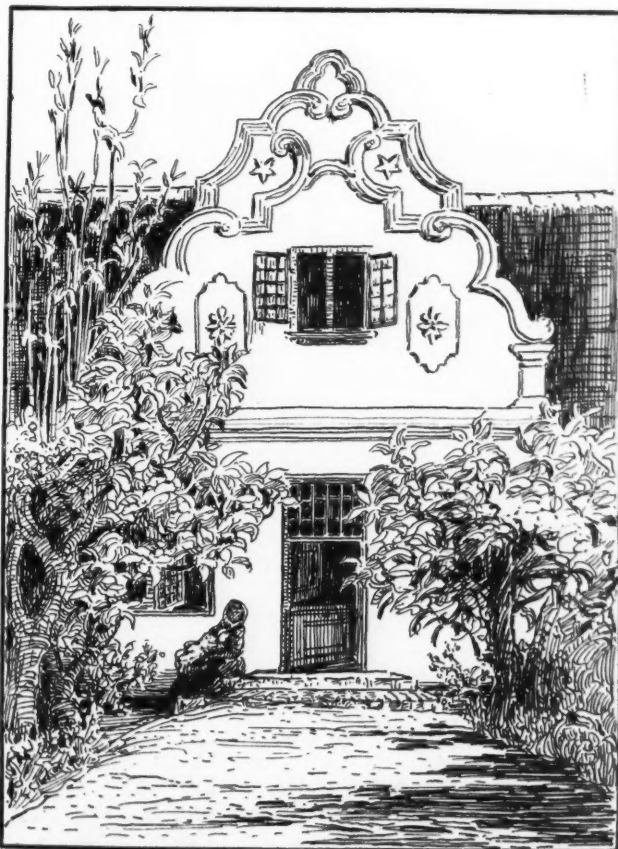
In the year 1679 Simon van der Stel was appointed by the Dutch East India Company to the command of Table Bay Settlement, then still a mere victualling station. Van Riebeeck's Town had grown up along the shore, and towards the Company's fruit and vegetable garden. Rustenburg, in the Round Wood or "Rondebosch," was a Company's station and garden, in whose grounds was the great barn (Groote Schuur) for storing the produce. Near by was Koornhoop, where grain was cultivated. The corn grown there was not very successful, and Batavia, forced by a paternal Government to accept it, revenged herself by making unpleasant remarks, as you may see for yourself in Leibbrandt's translations of the Company's correspondence. The family of the commander were all Company's men. I have been at some pains to trace their history, and it may not be without interest to record it. Captain Adriaan van der Stel, Simon's father, had been commander of the Mauritius Settlement, where Simon was born. Simon's eldest son Adriaan, who once lived at Oude or old Wynberg, the part lying about the present church, became in 1705 Governor of Amboyna. His second son, Cornelis, was lost in an East Indiaman, the Ridderschaap. The third, Willem Adriaan, held two posts at the Cape in 1680-83, and, after a short interval as magistrate of Amsterdam, succeeded his father as Governor. The youngest, Franz, took up some of the Company's land, and how he fared I shall speak of later. Simon's wife, Johanna, Jacota Six, was daughter of Caterina Hinlopen and Willem Six, one of the great Amsterdam family,

the friends and patrons of Rembrandt. The Hon. Joan Six, to whom many payments are noted in the Cape archives (to be transmitted by him to Mrs. Caterina van der Stel), was married to one of the Tulps, but to what relation of the celebrated Dr. Tulp, of Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson," I have not been able to find out. Simon's wife never came to the Cape. Kolbe, the inaccurate historian, who hated the van der Stels, writes that she was "not so complaisant as to follow her husband into Africa," and wrongly adds that her name was Constantia.

All the poetry and interest of the Cape Peninsula, and of much of the country further afield, is identified with the van der Stels. They had a genius and passion for making beautiful places to live in—dwellings of grave and quiet beauty nestling amongst trees. We reap the benefit of their taste, the van der Stels suffered for it; and so immeasurably do these old buildings gain by the tender shade of the oak trees they planted—trees found almost exclusively near the "van der Stel farms"—that if for no other reason, a tribute is due to their memory. Simon van der Stel himself has many monuments; the leafy town of Stellenbosch, with its thatched and gabled houses, set amongst fantastic mountain ridges, was founded by him. The beautiful site he chose on one of his first expeditions, the long streets, drowsy with the monotonous sound of their tiny tinkling streamlets, were planted by his orders. The name of his family is recorded in the name he gave it—his own in the serrated peak so noticeable from the Cape, Simonsberg, the last mountain to hold the flush of sunset. Simon's Bay, too, familiar to us of the twentieth century, is called after this Governor of the seventeenth who first explored it.

You get an extraordinary impression of vitality and intelligence in reading the van der Stel despatches—of a quaint, shrewd humour, of a certain magnificence. The French Ambassador from Louis XIV. records his journey to Namaqualand to search for copper, his coach followed by 100 oxen, 400 sheep, and forty waggons. Would any other Company's commander of the day have taken with him several hautboys, five or six violins, and two trumpets "to charm the aborigines"? I do not know why historians, with the exception of Mr. Leibbrandt, have done him such scant justice, for the work of no other commander is at all comparable.

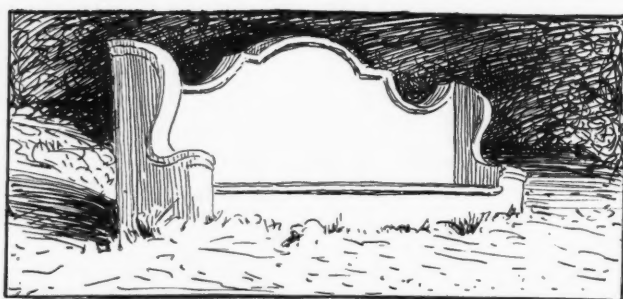
He explored, he planted, he built. Of his town house in the Company's garden (not far from the present Government House) we have a description from the visitors he lodged in it.



HOUSE IN STELLENBOSCH.

Other travellers tell us of his hospital on the canal not far off, considered very fine, with its great door and a square tower at each corner. Here, say the archives, the free blacks might bring to the patients all sorts of food, whether "pastry cakes or apple tarts." These buildings, together with the gateway of the Castle and the chief houses within the ramparts, were official, and the designs may have been supplied by the Company. The Castle, indeed, has much the same character as the old gateways and Company's houses of Ceylon. It is in the country that Simon van der Stel left so great a mark.

From the time of Van Riebeeck all the commanders were allowed to hold property. The first Muscatel grapes of the Cape were planted at his farm of Boscheuval, mentioned even in the Company's journal as a beautiful property, and now well known as the lovely grounds of



OLD GARDEN SEAT AT RUSTENBURG.

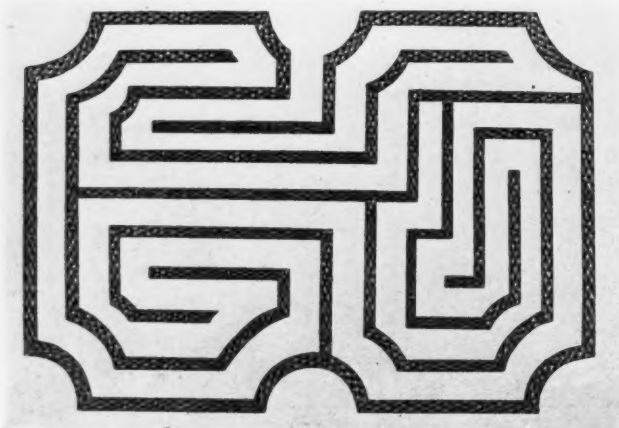


VERY OLD FARMHOUSE, KOORNHOOP, MOWBRAY.

Bishopscourt. The Company's inspector, Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein, touched at Table Bay in 1685 on his round to the East Indies. Botanists still remember him as the Governor of Malabar, who published twelve illustrated folio volumes called "*Hortus Malabicus*." To van der Stel he granted 891 morgen, about 1,782 acres, and on these broad lands the Governor built his home, a house with a stoep, a great hall, gabled; not unlike the house of Java, with the open "gallery" front and back, and the central closed "gallery" or hall. Not unlike the old Knickerbocker farm, with its dwelling hall, and the gable dated in metal-work. Resembling certain houses in the south of Holland, in Walcheren, birthplace of the sea rovers, the house of De Hoogh's pictures, designed, some say, with a reminiscence of Batavia. Yet not entirely like any, but individual and distinct, the first great home-stead of the Cape. A. F. TROTTER.

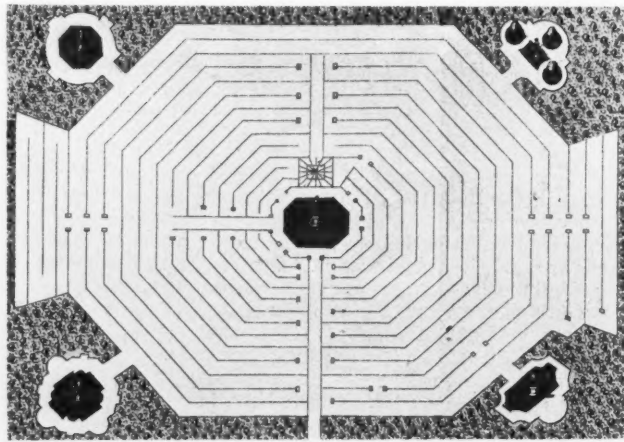
MAZES.—II.

IN a former article on garden mazes in England we traced their development from the designs of mediæval and Renaissance times, through the period of the Tudors and Stuarts, to the eve of the eighteenth century. We will now continue their history from that point to the present time. Among several mazes which are known to have been fully grown by the beginning of the reign of William and Mary was that in Lord Fauconbridge's garden at Sutton. It is described in "A short account of several gardens near London, with remarks on some particulars wherein they excel or are deficient, upon a view of them in 1691," printed from the original manuscript in "*Archæologie*," Vol. XII., page 181, as follows: "The maze, or wilderness, there is very pretty, being set all with greens, with a cypress arbour in the middle, supported with a well-wrought timber frame; of late it grows thin at the bottom, by their letting the fir trees grow without their reach unclipped." The use in the above description of the word "wilderness" as synonymous with "maze," is to be noted in connection with what we said on the subject at the conclusion of our former article. Of course, anything less "wild" than an eighteenth century "wilderness" could scarcely be imagined.



MAZE BY LOUDON AND WISE.

It was probably about the same time that the maze at Hampton Court was made in a corner of the great wilderness there, the wilderness being an elaborate plantation of dwarf trees,



MAZE DESIGNED BY G. STEPHEN.

intersected by paths flanked by espalier work, which was laid out about 1699 on the north of the Palace, and the general outlines of which are still preserved. It is strange, however, that though there are many references in the old accounts and records and bills to the making of the wilderness, no mention is anywhere to be found before the time of George I. of the maze. Nevertheless, its shape and position are clearly indicated in Kip's "*Bird's-eye View of Hampton Court*," published in 1712; and there can be no doubt that it existed in William III.'s time, though whether made for him or dating from an earlier time is uncertain. Loudon and Wise, the royal gardeners who planned the wilderness, either absorbed a pre-existing maze into their scheme for that plantation or themselves originated it. At any rate, they were fully alive to all that was to be said in favour of constructing mazes in gardens; and in their work on gardening, entitled "*The Retired Gardener*," adapted from the French of Louis Liger, and first published in 1706, they give a few hints

about them: "A labyrinth," they say, "is a place cut into several windings, set off with hornbeam, to divide them one from another. In great gardens we often meet with them; and the most valuable labyrinths are always those that wind most, as that at Versailles, the contrivance of which has been wonderfully liked by all that have seen it. The palisades of which labyrinths ought to be composed should be ten, twelve, or fifteen foot high; some there are that are no higher than one can lean on, but those are not the finest. The walks of a labyrinth ought to be kept rolled, and the hornbeams in them sheared in the shape of half-moons. The figure annexed will demonstrate better what further may be said on this ornament of a garden"—referring to the plan for a maze which is here reproduced.

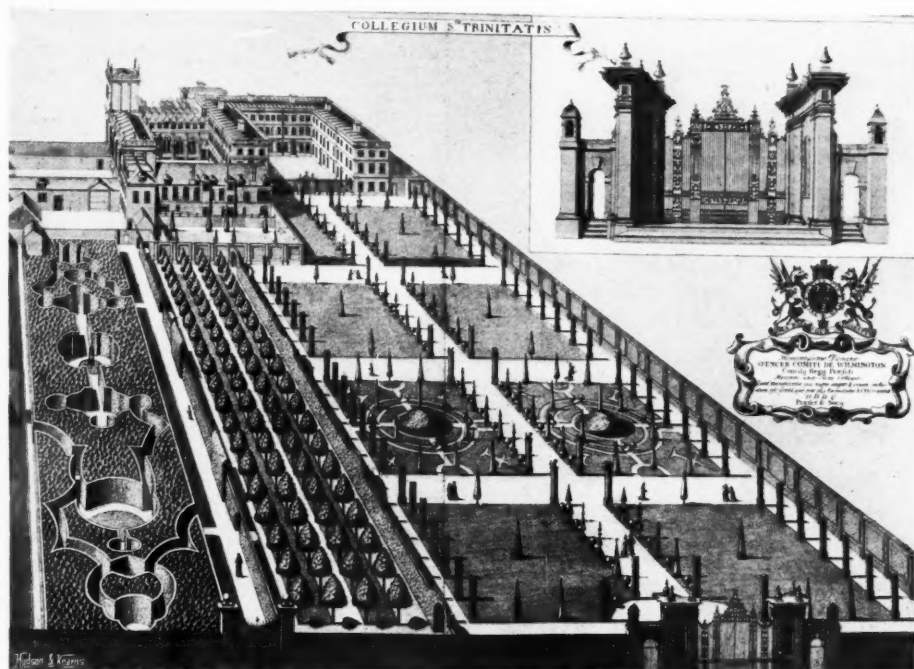
Stephen Switzer, another writer on gardening, who brought out his work "Ichnographia Rustica" in 1718, also has a good deal to say about mazes, mentioning particularly the one at Hampton Court, and giving, moreover, several original designs of his own, two of which are reproduced here. One of these forms part of an elaborate garden "lay-out"; the other is a separate plan. Of the latter Switzer observes that it is "a labyrinth of single hedges or banks after the ancient manner, though not altogether of the same figure, for when I came to

consider the use and nature of a labyrinth, according to all the constructions that have ever been made of it, viz., that it is an intricate and difficult labour to find out the center, and to be (as the vulgar like it for) so intricate as to lose oneself therein, and to meet with as great a number of stops therein and disappointments as possible, I thought the only way to accomplish it was to make a dubious choice of which way to take at the

very entrance and beginning itself, in order to find out the center, at which we are to end, into a little harbour cradled over; for which reason there is, in the very first coming in, in the center, where the grass plots and statues are designed, six different entrances, whereof there is but one that leads to the center, and that is attended with some difficulties and a great many stops." Switzer goes on to say: "The most that ever I observed in this case are at Hampton Court, where, I take it, there are but three or four

methods to lose or perplex the rambler in his going in, whereas in this there are above twenty; and I presume to say (if it were of much value when I had said so) that it is not a very easy matter to find this center without the draught, or perhaps with it."

Mazes continued to be in fashion for some years after Switzer wrote. In 1728, for instance, one was designed by Batty Langley, the architect, and published in his work, "New



THE MAZE, TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.



Copyright

MAZE AT HAMPTON COURT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

THE EAST GARDEN AND MAZE AT HATFIELD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Principles of Gardening," which, curiously enough, by the way, was the first book where the practice of clipping and mutilating trees was denounced. Another interesting maze is to be seen in a view of Trinity College, Oxford, which appeared in a work published in 1733, by W. Williams, entitled "Oxonia Depicta." The view is here reproduced.

But the vogue of the maze as a garden embellishment was already on the wane. The new taste in gardening, fostered by Queen Caroline, under the advice of her gardeners, Kent and Bridgman, to whom, as to Batty Langley, elaborate topiary work was anathema, was now turning in a different direction—eventually indeed to develop into the devastating transformations of Capability Brown and his followers. Fortunately, amidst all the alterations carried out in the gardens at Hampton Court during the reign of George II., the maze was left undisturbed, and indeed was tended and cared for, as one of the chief amusements and curiosities of the place. It even inspired a poem, which was published in 1749 in the *British Magazine*. Other mazes, however, scarcely less interesting, suffered neglect and were eventually removed.

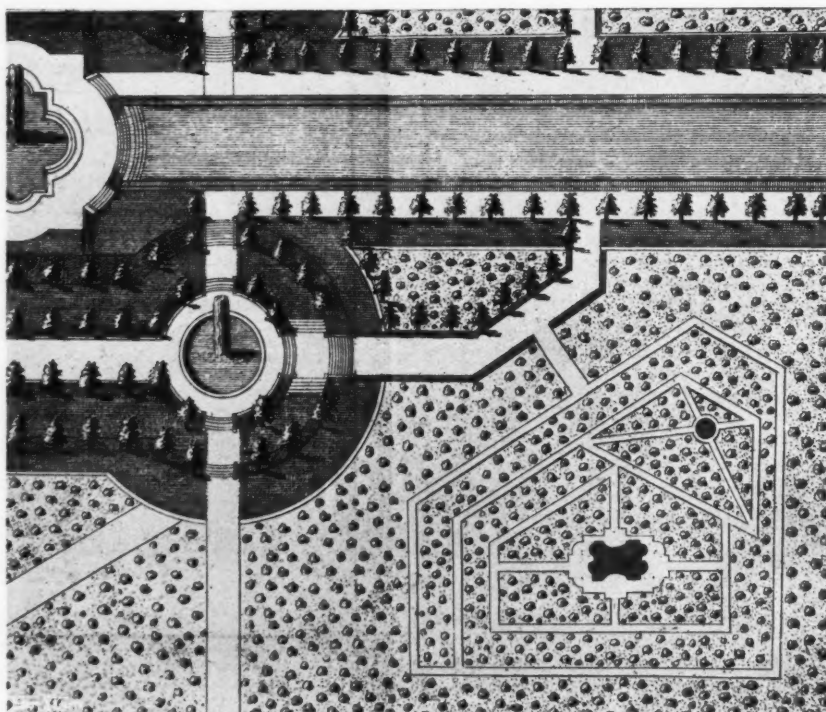
For 120 years or so no other maze seems to have been made in England, until one was planted about fifty years ago at Somerleyton, near Lowestoft, by John Thomas. It is of English yew, with walls or hedges 6½ ft. high, without a single break. In the centre is a grass mound raised to the level of the hedge top, and surmounted by a pagoda. At two corners are banks of laurels some 15 ft.

or 16 ft. high. Another modern maze was the one planted, by desire of the Prince Consort, in the gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society at South Kensington. It was designed by the late Lieutenant W. A. Nesfield, but was allowed to go to ruin and was destroyed. In recent years a maze has been planted at Mistley Place, while another modern maze is the one at Hatfield, of which an illustration is annexed.

NEW FOREST PONIES.

UP to within the last fifteen years the term "New Forest pony" may be said to have conveyed little or nothing to those not intimately acquainted with the forest, its laws and customs. In spite of this obscurity, the breed has existed and flourished for hundreds of years, indeed, since the time of Canute, and the type is a very marked one. For anyone who is at all familiar with the forest and its old customs, dating in many cases from feudal times, the surroundings in which he finds himself cannot but have charms. The commoners, or small landowners lowly in estate, with their cottage and few acres, are all the owners of ponies which have the run of the forest year in and year out, till such time as their owners think fit to round them up and catch them for sale or work.

They live entirely on what they can gather for themselves,



PORTION OF GARDEN DESIGNED BY G. SWITZER.

and as a means of distinction they are all branded with their owners' brand and tail-marked according to the "walk" to which they belong. It may not be amiss here to explain briefly, should some of our readers be unfortunate enough to be entire strangers to the forest, that it is divided into four walks or districts, each under the supervision of an agister, who is a sort of public stockman or boundary rider, and is appointed by the highest authority in the forest, viz., the Court of Verderers.

Each agister, who is generally a born forester, and most probably himself the owner of ponies, may be said to know every pony in his walk, and its owner. He constantly traverses his walk on horseback, and should he see a pony in trouble, which is the forest expression for road-straying, or in pound, or a pony sick or dead, he immediately notifies the owner.

It is most interesting to ride through the forest and encounter the various companies or groups of six or eight ponies, composed of mares with a "Squire of Dames" in attendance. Any intrusion on the part of a member of another company is bitterly resented, and prompt expulsion is the penalty for a pony forcing its company on such exclusive society.

To the commoners, their ponies are in many cases a source of wealth and means of livelihood, even as the wealth of the Bedouin Arab is reckoned by his flocks, or of the Zulu by the tale of his cattle. I believe it has been said that "an Irishman may not have so much as the price of a drink in his pocket, but he always has a horse." So, also, the last possession a commoner parts with is his pony.

The New Forester as a harness pony leaves nothing to be desired, whilst as a riding pony he will travel miles and miles every day, on the scantiest allowance of food, without showing signs of distress.

In the light of recent events, it seems certain that a brilliant future is in store for this most excellent old breed of pony, and for the commoner an ample market. Several gentlemen, whose authority cannot for one moment be doubted, have touched on the subject of the value of these hardy little animals for Mounted Infantry purposes. If Sir Walter Gilbey has written a most interesting book, entitled "Small Horses in War," Lord Arthur Cecil is furnishing an object-lesson in his little Corps of New Forest Scouts, composed entirely of commoners mounted on their own ponies. A horse for Mounted Infantry purposes must possess stamina and endurance, together with that hardiness of constitution which shall render him indifferent to the severest climatic conditions. These qualities, and a natural cleverness, the result of the wild existence they have led all their lives, the New Forest ponies possess in the fullest degree. The War Office would do well to listen to the advice so willingly given by Sir Walter Gilbey, Lord Arthur Cecil, and others whose fame as breeders stands out in such bold relief. Of late years incalculable benefit has been derived from the energetic efforts of the New Forest Pony Association, by introducing strains of blood from the other indigenous breeds of the United Kingdom, viz., Exmoor, the fells of Westmoreland and Cumberland, and the West of Scotland.

Hitherto attempts to improve the breed by the introduction of Arab blood have not met with unqualified success, nor with the entire approval of the commoners, but the second or third cross from the Arab with the breeds above-mentioned (which are also characterised by their natural hardiness) may prove to be a valuable link in the perfecting of the chain of experiments which shall produce an animal possessing quality, pace, endurance, hardiness of constitution, and a docility which will render him invaluable in guarding the possessions of the Empire.

SEEDTIME.



C. F. Grindrod.

PLOUGHING POTATO GROUND.

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M^{R.} SWINBURNE has poetically described March as the time when "the hounds of spring are on winter's traces," and there is something in this definition which will appeal even to the unpoetical mind. The farmer, in many a pithy proverb, has expressed his consciousness of the importance of this month. The best known of them, "a handful of March dust is worth a king's ransom," is of obvious origin. It means that, March being the month of sowing, cereal crops have a very much better chance to succeed if the tilth be fine. Should the month be wet, as is too frequently the case, ploughing either becomes impossible altogether, or it results in a formation of heavy clods of earth that later on will be as hard as bricks; they form the very worst possible bed for the germinating young seeds. There is a popular belief, too, that if March be dry the rest of the year is likely to be propitious to husbandry; but whether that be simply an inference from the fact that a good seedtime is the best preparation for a good harvest, or an actual experience of weather, it would be difficult to say.

Meteorology is one of the sciences that as yet falls very far short of being exact, and, so far as it has been studied, it goes to show that the factors which produce it are so numerous and vaguely known that a change beyond that which will take place within twenty-four hours cannot be safely prophesied. So we fear that the connection between a dry March and a sunny August is more or less imaginary in character. Be that so or not, the farmer is the last man in the world to sit down and speculate about it. The increased heat of the sun's rays in

March receives a glad welcome from him. On the meadows and on the turnip fields hundreds of lambs are bleating and demanding the unceasing care of their shepherd. If the flock be a pedigree one, its fortune may be made or marred by its treatment in the lengthening days of March. Calves, too, have arrived, and an outlook is kept for early chickens and the rest of the small deer of the farm. Most of all does the farmer regard it, in the old words, as the time when the sower goeth forth to sow, and our photographer has successfully caught some of the poetry of that operation. He shows us the homely farm horses, not pure bred or strikingly handsome, yet picturesque, because they are in their proper place.

The ploughboy, too, fits in with his team. Mr. Ruskin, in a famous passage of his writings, asks the young men of England, "Can they plough with a steady hand?" and he would have had every one of them trained to do this kind of agricultural work. Nor can we think that he was altogether wrong. If all the city clerks and all the men of business were turned out once a year to do a month's ploughing, it would undoubtedly have a most beneficial effect on their physical qualities. The ploughman who follows his task under the broad sky on the open fields, where his only companions are the birds and other wild things of earth and air, and where he has the flowers to watch while the early spring comes along, colouring the hedgerow with its light brilliant green which tells of a new life of vegetation, is in closer touch with Nature than almost any other labourer can be.

Of course it is a very easy matter to be sceptical and say



C. F. Grindrod.

HARROWING.

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that there is no one less prone to see "a glory in the grass, a splendour in the flower," than the ploughman. People make and write poetry about him, but as a general rule he himself is not in the least degree afflicted with sentiment; people of his class seldom are. With him the mere fight for existence is so frightfully hard that it leaves little or no leisure for the reflections and meditations of idler people. Anyone who has seen a company of the oldest peasants of an estate gathered together, as they sometimes are, to receive rewards and encouragement at the annual show or similar occasion, cannot have failed to notice how deep the lines of care and misery are graven on those strong and weather-beaten faces. Their old age is not often beautiful, but is bitter and hard. It shows the unhappy ending of lives that have had little happiness in them.

It is, perhaps, taking the realistic side of things to argue so, but for anyone to obscure the truth can lead to no good result; and even in regard to their physical condition ploughmen are not to be envied. Some day, perhaps, when the training of men is better understood, hard labour will not have the distorting effect that it has at present. There is no need for a gardener or a farm servant to have the round shoulders so common among them. There is still less need for them to have crooked backs and a habitual stoop. The rheumatism that generally comes to the outdoor labourer at an age when a man of intellect is in his prime is by no means as inevitable as has been thought. A time will probably come when boys and girls at school will be given physical exercises fitting

them for the work that has to be done afterwards, and showing them also how to do that work in a manner that will strengthen and not distort the framework of their bodies; but that consummation is still very far off. The ploughman may also be known by his stoop, and his long dragging step a natural result of his wearing such heavy boots, which in wet weather are increased in weight by the clay adhering to them. Yet in saying this, we are but pointing to a defect common to all workmen. Education has not yet been studied as a means for fitting boys and girls for the tasks of life, and in factory and workshop distortion and premature decay are much more common than in the country, because the farm servant has this compensation—that although he goes the wrong way about his task, and has no idea of avoiding the penalties due to exposure to all kinds of weather, yet life in the open air overcomes many things.

When men were paid at the rate of 8s. or 9s. a week, and had to support a family on that pittance, it is certain that they must have been, according to our ideas, most inadequately fed and clothed; yet they gave substantial proof of a vigour beyond



C. F. Grindrod.

PREPARING FOR BARLEY.

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that of the average town worker. The large families produced by them became almost a proverb, and one has but to spend a little time in a village churchyard to see that those who sowed and ploughed and harvested in the years gone by attained very often to a patriarchal age. The reason for this undoubtedly lay first in the temperance that was more or less enforced. If it was broken occasionally, it was only with English home-brewed, that did not produce the frightful results which follow the ardent and often adulterated spirits consumed by the town worker. Probably, too, under feeding is, in the end, less injurious to a man's physical prosperity than over-feeding; and the slops, as we call them, on which the labourers of East Anglia lived, although they certainly did not impart the robust health found in districts where wages were higher, nevertheless produced better results than might have been expected.

It always remains a mystery how the starved peasants of England in the time of Wellington turned out to be the best soldiers that a general ever commanded, when going through the storm and distress of his Peninsular campaign. At that time recruiting was very largely done in the rural districts, and the recruits were often the weeds of very large families that had



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STIFF LAND.

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been brought up at a time when wheat ranged from 60s. to 120s. a quarter, and bread, or at least wheaten bread, was completely out of the poor man's reach. They had to try and make loaves of dry potatoes and turnips, and were glad to get black bread made of rye and barley. Even of this they never had enough, yet, after enlisting and being shipped abroad as raw recruits, they fought like heroes, and earned the fame that ever since has been attached to British infantry. That, surely, is proof enough of the exceeding healthiness of agricultural labour. It can hardly be said that the work of the farm is monotonous; at any rate, it is not anything like so much so as the labourer's task in town.

The present is the time for sowing seed, and from now onward till harvest there is the slow and gradual but steady progress of the crops to be noted. At every stage they require a different kind of attention. For some time they lie dormant in the earth, and the fields have the neat and rolled appearance of a newly-dug garden. Gradually they thrust little spear-points through the mould, and with the right seed, alas! comes a great

mass of weeds; and perhaps, if the farm is not one that has been well attended to, the charlock is as plentiful as the barley. It was almost impossible to get the better of it in the old time, except by sending women to cut it with hooks when the yellow flower was out, and they trampled and spoiled the corn in doing so. Now, however, with a spraying machine, it can be killed at an early stage of growth, and there is no longer any excuse for a farmer allowing his fields to be tinted with the pale yellow of wild mustard. After that, the next stage is when the flower comes and the berry is formed and the crop gradually ripens to harvest. Then the corn is cut and sheaved, and carried to stack-yards and thrashed. Each of these operations is entirely different from all the rest, and each acts as an inducement to the labourer to look forward to that which follows. That is where his life differs from that of the town artisans, who very likely

year in and year out has nothing to do but to attend to one small bit of machinery, without a break to relieve the tedious monotony of it.



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"CHARLIE PLOUGHING THE HILL."

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THE MEN AND THEIR TEAM.

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SPEKE HALL in Lancashire, the famous mansion standing near the estuary of the Mersey, is beyond all question one of the most interesting houses in England. It is, perhaps, the finest representative remaining of the timber edifices in which our ancestors lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such houses look precisely what they are—the dwelling-places of gentlefolk. They are neither prisons nor fortresses, even though the disused moat suggests that in more warlike days defence was at least as important as amenity. Speke Hall still preserves the aspect of Tudor times. As we see it to-day, so it was designed by those who built it. It is no museum of styles. You cannot detect the taste of successive owners in inappropriate additions, and the courtyard, the library, and the ancient yews are harmoniously suited. Begun in 1490, to replace the old stone Hall that had sheltered the Norris family for two and a-half centuries, it was not completed before 1605, and now after 300 years it is nearly as perfect as it was then, and, thanks to the family of the present owner, we may hope it will remain for some centuries more. Houses like Speke were raised mostly in those districts wherein wood was more easy to procure than stone or brick, though

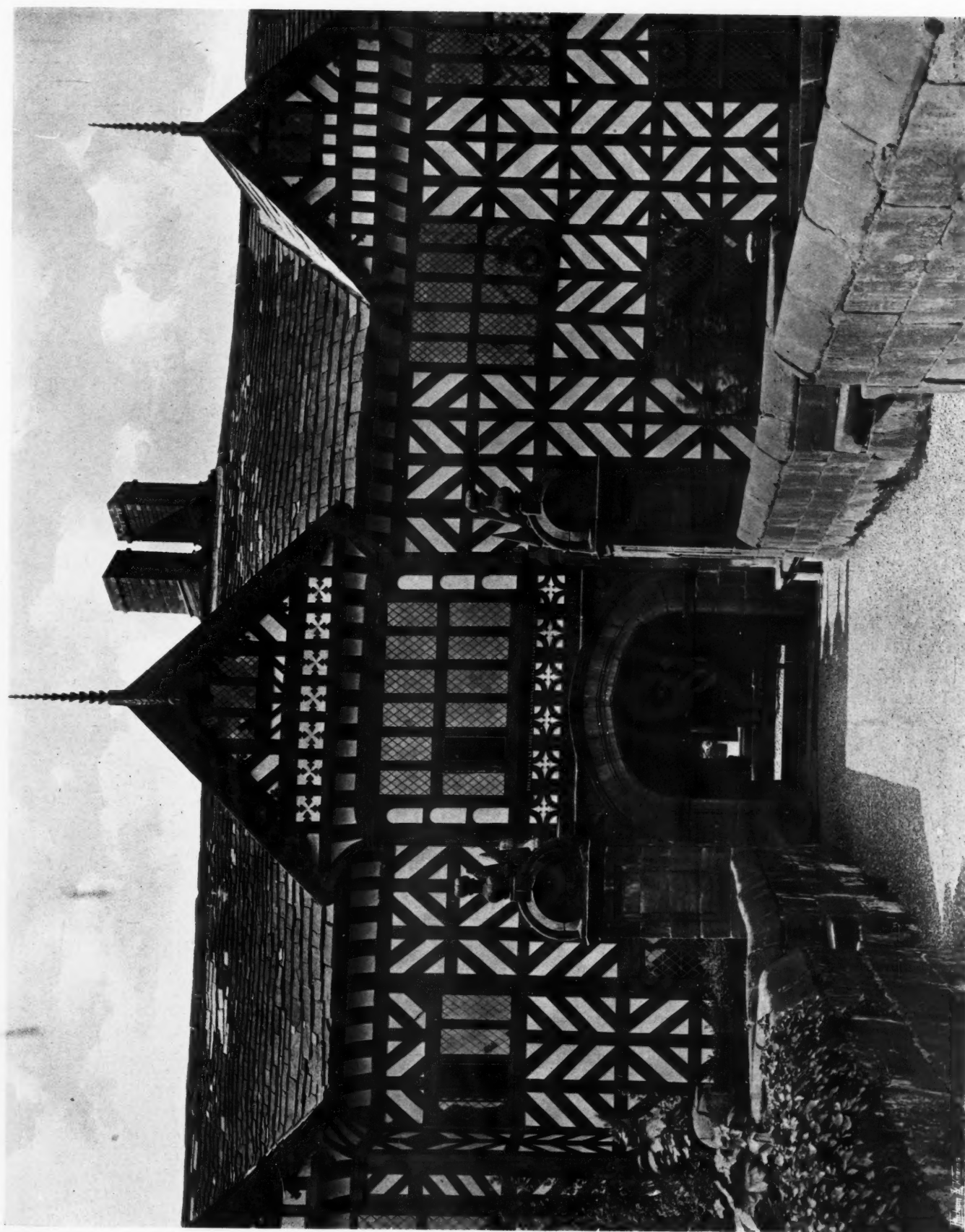
timber-framing is often united with work in those materials. In the present case the cut stones of the more ancient Hall (of which only the stables and part of the south-east wall were preserved) provided ample material for the foundations and chimney-stacks of the present building. The wood used throughout was English oak, well jointed and pegged together, now scarred and seamed with the suns of centuries, as we may see plainly in the illustrations. It is with special gratification that we present these pictures, because the famous old Lancashire house, though often illustrated, has never had justice done to it. When John Leland, the antiquary of King Henry VIII., went to various seats in Lancashire, and visited the house of Sir William Leyland, presumably his kinsman, at the Morleys, near Leigh, he described it as "builded, saving the foundation of stone squared that riseth within a great moat a six feet above the water, all of timber, after the common sort of building of houses of gentlemen for most of Lancashire." Such a house, retaining all its characteristics, is Speke Hall. Extraordinary quaintness is in the overhanging gables, enriched with splendid barge-boards and finials. In the picturesque treatment of the structural timber framework, diversified by the introduction of



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NORTH-EAST EXIT IN QUADRANGLE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE ENTRANCE.



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THE BRIDGE AND MOAT FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

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GATEWAY TO THE GARDEN

"COUNTRY LIFE."

quatrefoils and other adornments, this house is like many others in Lancashire and Cheshire. The moat has long been drained, but the stone bridge remains, a marvel of picturesqueness, and all the details of the stonework, as of the timber, are extremely good and sometimes curious. In the great plain of Lancashire the houses of the gentry in the sixteenth century were rendered safe more often by wet moats than by walls or towers. The

quadragular structure sheltering a courtyard and surrounded by a deep moat was the highest type of houses of this class. Such were Clayton, Wardley, Ordsall, Samlesbury, Moreton, and other old halls. The form of these was more stately and complete than the E-shaped or irregularly built blocks, and a better example of the class could not be found than Speke. The house stands in a great curve of the Mersey, some seven miles above Liverpool, surrounded by woods, through which an avenue leads to the private landing-place. The estuary here opens out into a lake-like expanse, four or five miles wide, and by its curve a view of the city of Liverpool is shut out. The principal approach, after leaving Garston, runs through a level agricultural country, dotted with well-kept homesteads, and enters the demesne through shrubs and trees which disclose



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WEST CORNER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

a charming view of the north-east front of the house. Turning now to the history of the place, we read in Domesday Book: "Uctred held Spec. There are ii carucates of land. It was worth lxiv. pence," from which we gather that only forty acres of the land were arable and the rest forest or waste. This Uctred was a Saxon Thane, and, under the King, the largest untitled landowner between the Ribble and the Mersey in South Lancashire. He held

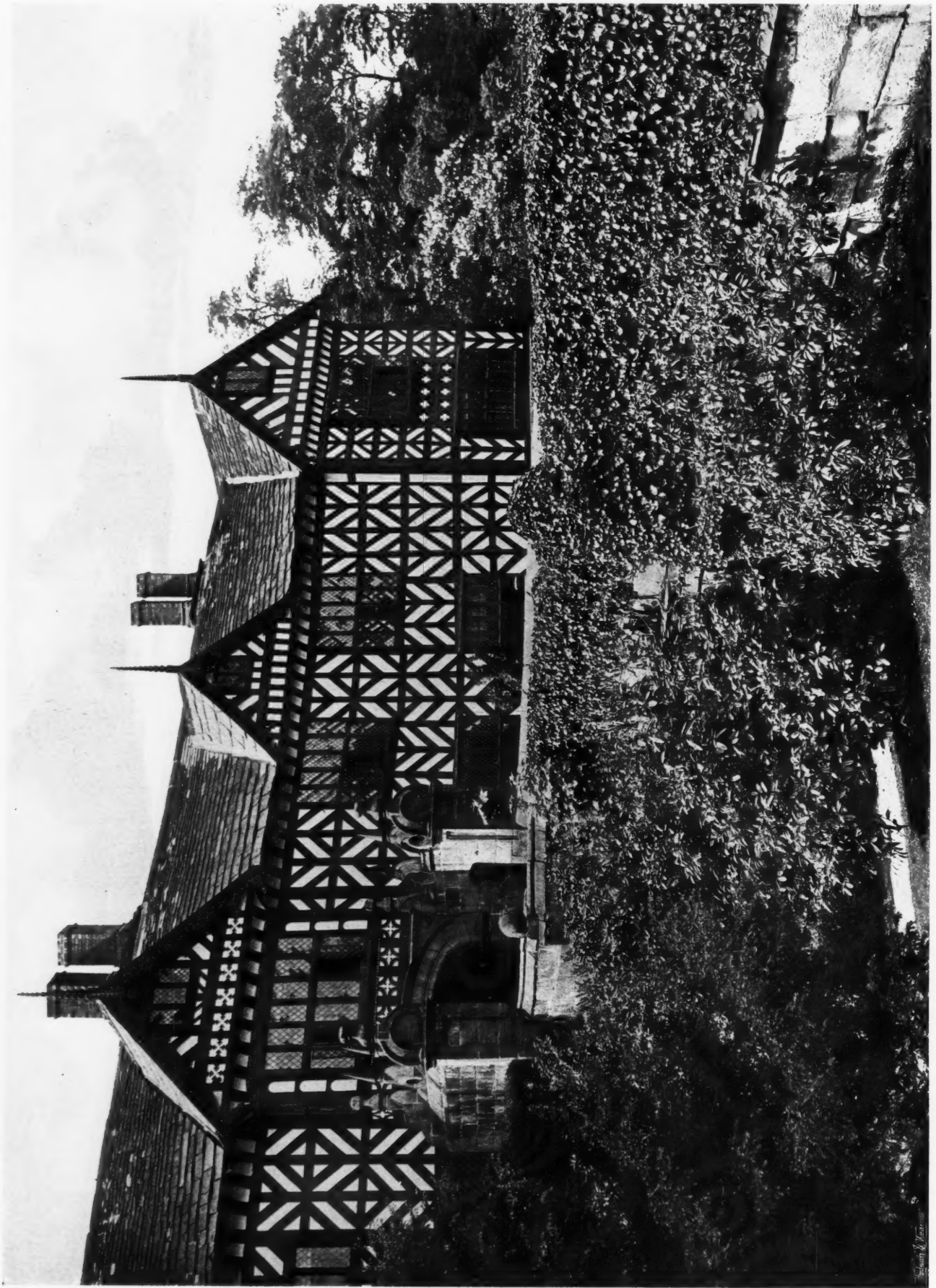
estates in many townships, and was exempt from all the usual burdens of tenure except six. In the middle of the thirteenth century we find Speke shared by the families of Haselwal, Norris, and Molyneux. The lordship passed from the latter family in 1286 to the Erneys, and from them by marriage to the Norris family in Richard II.'s reign, they having inherited the old Hall from Sir Patric Haselwal three generations before with his moiety of the estate. It was not, however, till this marriage that every possible claim for the lands and lordship of Speke was vested in the Norris family. In the year 1490 the present timbered house was begun by Sir William Norris. His son Henry fought under Sir Edward Stanley at Flodden in 1513, and was one of those to receive autograph letters of thanks from King Henry VIII. He died at Speke in 1524, and was



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THE QUADRANGLE FROM THE NORTH-EAST ENTRANCE.

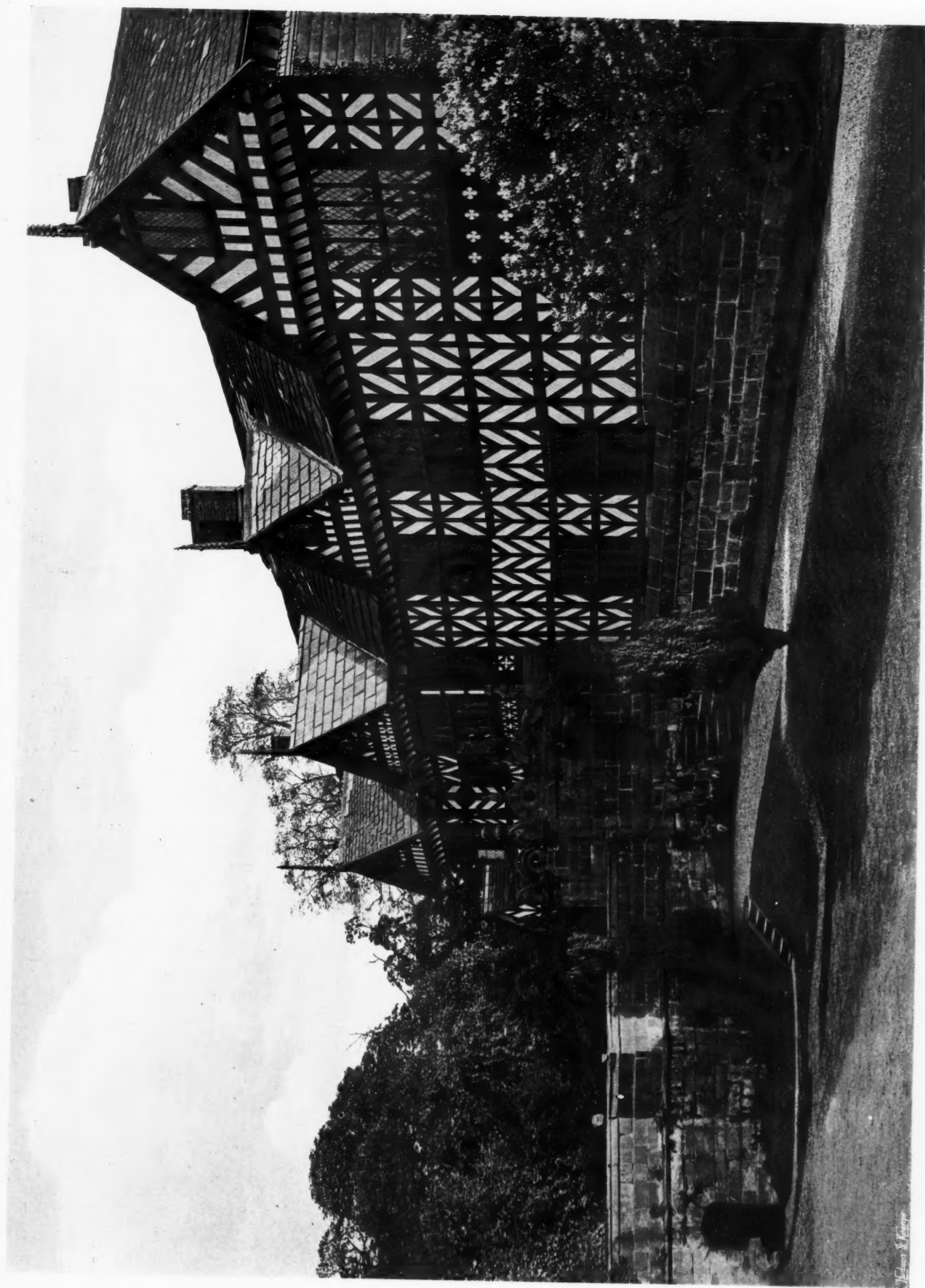
"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE HALL, THE BRIDGE, AND THE MOAT.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE NORTH-WEST FRONT.

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GARDEN EXIT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

succeeded by his son Sir William, who in 1547 fought at Musselburgh. Three years previously he joined Lord Hertford's expedition, which sacked the Palace of Holyrood and burned Edinburgh. From the Royal Palace he removed a number of books, notably a copy of Bartolus and four folios of the Laws of Scotland inscribed in his own hand (May 11th, 1544), as heirlooms at Speke. They are now preserved in the Athenæum Library in Liverpool. Tradition has always maintained that the architecturally carved panelling at one end of the great hall at Speke was taken from Holyrood (this will be alluded to in another article).

During the progress of the building, Sir William often resided at his seat near Chester, where he was Sergeant of the Bridge Gate. His family remained Roman Catholic, and in building the Hall a chapel was not omitted. It was placed to the left of the principal entrance, and has long been used as a servants' hall, Speke now having a church of its own. For the tenants there was also built at Garston a church or chapel of ease to Childwall on the site of the present church and its immediate predecessor. After 1547, becoming too old for active service, he pushed forward the building of Speke, and about 1560 added the genealogical mantel-piece in the great drawing-room. Sir William himself was twice married, and had in all nineteen children, as is recorded in this curious carving. Edward Norris, his eldest surviving son,

lived a quiet life, and completed the present Hall, retaining only the old stables of the previous buildings. In 1598 he completed the principal entrance with a stone porch (unroofed) and parapets to the bridge over the moat. It is just possible that this bridge is a part of the older house; it is certainly of the same stone. Over the arch on a beam of timber Edward carved in relief the simplest of inscriptions: "This worke 25 yards long was wholly built by Edw. N. Esq. Ano. 1598." This is shown in one of the illustrations. The word "wholly" has led many to think he was the builder of the present house, but, as before mentioned, it was begun in 1490 by his great-grandfather.

Five generations later Mary Norris inherited the property, in 1726, and ten years afterwards married Lord Sydney Beauclerk. The fine gentlemen of this family were absentees, and not only shamefully neglected the house, but heavily mortgaged the property, which was sold by the grandson of Mary Norris in 1795 to Richard Watt, of Oak Hill, Liverpool, and of Bishop Burton, Yorkshire.

Structurally the house was not harmed, and about 1820, under the rule of Richard Watt, great-grandfather of the present owner, the old Hall was again cared for, preserved, and beautified, and during his lifetime it became a centre of antiquarian and even historical interest. Men like Gregson, Harland, Cox, and above all Ormerod, wrote on the house and its history.



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THE NORTH-WEST FACADE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE VINE HUNT.

THE Vine Hunt has a history of about a hundred years. It was founded by Mr. Chute of the Vine, two names familiar to all readers of Horace Walpole's letters. Mr. Chute thought a small hound best suited to his rough and flinty country, and had inscribed over his kennel door the words, "*Multum in parvo.*" Fox-hunting in Hampshire is a sport of a very different kind from fox-hunting in a grass country. Foxes are harder to find and harder to kill, though,

of course, their lives are less often saved by finding a substitute than is the case in Leicestershire. But it is a kind of hunting that taxes the skill and science of the huntsman and the powers of the hound. As a rule, in Hampshire in general, and in the Vine country in particular, the pack has to work out every inch of the line in the woodlands and over the flinty ploughs, both of which abound. Thus, in order to show sport in Hampshire the best-bred hounds and the most skilful huntsmen are needed. In this latter respect no county has been more fortunate than Hampshire, which numbers among its past huntsmen both the Tom Smiths, Jack Fricker, Treadwell, George Carter, and many other well-known names, including Jack West of the Cottessmore,

who hunted the Vine for a good many seasons.

It will be observed on looking at the hunting map that Hampshire is a county which supports a good many packs of hounds. The fact is that the extensive woodlands which are to be found within its limits cannot be hunted too much. Thus the members of the Vine found a great benefit accrue to their sport when Mr. Assheton Smith set to work to make the Tedworth country and hunted it very thoroughly; he himself hunting at one

time six days, while George Carter spent two in the woodlands. This gave the hounds plenty of work and kept the foxes on the move. It is said that the Vine never had better sport than in the days of the Squire of Tedworth. In fact, in this, as in other woodland countries, good sport may be had if hounds can be always in the big coverts. If woods are well rided and often drawn there will be runs, and, since the foxes are stout, long hunts. The Vine has plenty of country for four days a week. It must not, however, be supposed that it is all woodlands. There is some fine open country by Kingsclere, and hounds can and do run very fast over Sidmonton Down and similar districts. The great difficulty is the flints, which are



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GOING TO THE MEET.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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COMING INTO OLD BASING.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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HOUNDS ARRIVING AT OLD BASING. "COUNTRY LIFE."

apt to cut the hounds' feet and necessitate a strong pack in point of numbers, since many hounds are lamed. There is not much in the way of fences in the open, but in the vales there are bits of cramped country with the fences placed on banks not too sound and often with a ditch on one side or the other. The soil in places is deep. Thus a stout horse is needed, and though on many successive days the demands of pace may not be very great, yet there are times when hounds can simply fly.

Here, as all over Hampshire, wherever the foxes are fairly dealt with they are stout and wild. In one respect the Vine has not been fortunate. The Masters have changed very frequently, and there have been some eccentric characters among them. One Master, for example, insisted on feeding the hounds on sheep's trotters instead of flesh, with very unsatisfactory results, and once the country was victimised by an adventurer of the Facey Romford stamp, who was, however, not nearly so good a sportsman, nor so clever in handling hounds, as our old friend. The country, however, is now fortunate in having secured Sir Richard Rycroft, who will be the second of his name to be Master of the Vine Hunt. In its past history one of the most enthusiastic supporters was the great Duke of Wellington. Everyone knows what he thought of hunting as a part of an officer's training, and he was himself very fond of the sport. For many years, although Strathfieldsaye was not in the Vine

country and he had but little property within the limits of the Hunt, the Duke subscribed £500 a year to its funds.

The kennels are at Overton, and the pack belongs to the country. Thus, to a certain extent, the hounds have been independent of the changes of Masters. There is a useful pack in kennel, and, indeed, were it not so, the woods and flints would soon find them out. None but a true-shaped hound would last any time. We have seen that Hampshire has had some famous huntsmen, but it is a question whether there the whippers-in are not more important to sport. Everything depends on their control of the hounds, and on the whipper-in being able to get hounds together quickly and out of covert in a sportsmanlike manner. Runs do not come too often in Hampshire or elsewhere, and when there is a chance it is provoking to lose it because the hounds are hanging back or are running another line in covert. It was hunting in a similar country to the Vine that drew from Beckford

his famous (but not universally true) remark that a first-rate whipper-in is more necessary to sport than a good huntsman.

It was with the Vine hounds that Mr. Tom Smith (a



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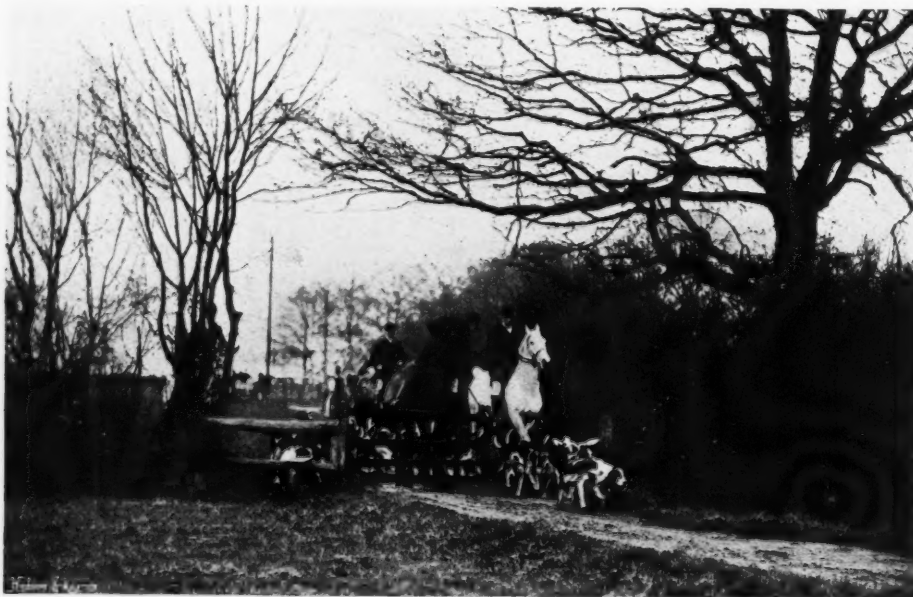
YOUNG HUNTERS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

sportsman only second to Mr. Assheton Smith) killed his first fox. He was on a visit to Mr. Chute of the Vine. Anxious to show the younger sportsman what his hounds could do, Mr.

Chute drew a covert on a very frosty day. There was a scent, as there often is in frosty weather, and the fox took its way over some of the most hilly ground in the Vine country, and there are some steep downs in parts. Tom Smith was left alone with the pack, for he only dared to ride to them, and when the others struggled up he had killed his fox.

The Vine is one of those countries that one would scarcely visit for hunting; but if either business or pleasure takes you there, there will be found plenty of sport of a very sterling character. Mr. Tom Smith and his namesake are both instances of the sport that a huntsman can show in Hampshire if he will ride up to his hounds. In a moderate scenting country a quick cast will often save the situation, for scent soon dies away, and the cast which five minutes after hounds threw up might have been a success will show no trace of a fox a little later.



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LETTING HOUNDS THROUGH A GATE. "COUNTRY LIFE."

Thus here, as elsewhere, very much depends on the huntsman; he must not only be thoroughly acquainted with the ways of foxes and hounds, particularly the pack which he controls, but he must also know the characteristics of the country over which he hunts, and this is one of those things which cannot be learned in a day.

The Vine hounds date from about 1790. It has often been said that these hounds were endowed by their founder, Mr. Chute; but this, I believe, is not the case. The Vine is now an excellent provincial pack, supported by subscriptions like any other.

WATER-COLOURS OF . THE 19th CENTURY.

ONE has to avoid the kind of criticism which consists in reproaching one movement with not having had the qualities of the others whilst maintaining its own . . . It is well to bear this dictum in mind while visiting Messrs. Agnew's annual exhibition of selected water-colours. There is something old-fashioned in the medium, nowadays, when we hear so much about Impressionism, Pastel Societies, and solid oil colours. Excellent as some of these drawings are, many people must be out of sympathy with the element of smallness, of "stipple," and the absence of breadth in them.



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IN A NARROW LANE, SINGLE FILE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

They carry date—not as Sheraton and Chippendale furniture, but as early Victorian sideboards and bookcases carry date. Turner, to be sure, in some of his less laboured drawings, has reached a higher degree of artistic expression, but it would be hard for anyone to deny that the Peter de Wints, Copley Fieldings, Müllers, Sir John Gilberts, and Cattermole have ceased to give any very strong thrill of pleasure. Now, when every effect can be produced with comparatively little mechanical labour, by pastel or by M. Raffaelli's solid oil colours, water-colour seems to be

completely *démodé*, demanding an enormous amount of patient labour for very disproportionate results.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, men of keen artistic sensibilities, as we know, did succeed in producing some beautiful work. It is no longer necessary to dwell on the merits of Turner, David Cox, W. Hunt, or Miss Gow. In the present exhibition, however, the most satisfactory picture, from all points of view, is "The Bee-hives," by Fred Walker. It has the richness of colour and the sweet, tender feeling we have grown to expect in all Fred Walker's works. The back view of the peasant woman holding her baby in her arms as she stands watching the bees; the expression of suppressed excitement in the boy's figure; the far-away corner of the cottage garden, tangled, weedy, cabbage grown; the old-world atmosphere of the straw-thatched bee-hives, placed in a row against the hedge, are all so delicately, so faithfully, and yet so lovingly drawn, that the picture conveys the pleasantest sense of restful enjoyment. Though the motive is so slight that it can scarcely be called an incident in the lives of these rustics, it succeeds in conveying the strongest impression of their uneventful existence. Other artists of the period have ventured further afield in search of a subject and have achieved less. Here we have a little world complete in itself. There is no desire to know what is going on beyond the four walls of the frame,



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HOUNDS GO OFF TO DRAW.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

we are satisfied to linger in this little corner of an old-world garden. It would be difficult to discover what it is that actually conveys this sense of completeness. No doubt it lies in some inherent quality in the artist's soul. In some deep-rooted comprehension of the poetry of our everyday life. But in whatever it may lie, it gives a quality to Fred Walker's work which we find in no other painter's of his day.

Miss Gow's pictures have also an uncommon charm and delicacy. Though they differ in every other respect from Fred Walker's, they resemble his in so far that they can still give us a certain thrill of pleasure—a feeling that the artist has successfully conveyed his or her emotion to the spectator. Miss Gow can draw the elegant, dainty muslin-clad damsels of the last century with quite an unrivalled sweetness and grace. Her two little pictures, "The Necklace" and "The Fair Student," are both charming and caressing to the eye.

Among the Turners shown are some of the best-known drawings, Lancaster from the Aqueduct, Llanthony Abbey, Malvern Abbey and Gate, Glastonbury, and many others which were done for the "England and Wales," the "South Coast," and "Harbours of England" series. One or two sketches and studies by the same artist, such as the "Genoa"—very beautiful in colour—and the two suggestive little drawings on grey paper of Schloss Eltz,

are examples of water colour used in a more modern and impressionist spirit. In the William Hunts it is easy to trace the source of Ruskin's great admiration. In these highly elaborate and detailed drawings of fruit, the naturalist's temperament rather than the artist's will find satisfaction. Carefully and skilfully drawn, every fruit modelled with the utmost patience and precision, something after the Dutch still-life painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there is something hard and unnatural in the clean, almost crude colouring, which detracts considerably from the artistic excellence of the work. There is none of the soft charm of light that we find in a dish of peaches painted by Chardin, for instance, that great French master of the eighteenth century. Neither is there anything approaching the rich quality in composition and tone of a *de Heem*. In short, they are more or less faithful copies of Nature set down with diligence but without emotion, with mechanical skill but without artistry.

The detailed drawings of cottages by Mrs. Allingham, the stormy hayfields and moors by David Cox, Prout's pleasant old French street scenes, and the ambitious views of cathedral cities by Fripp, are all to be seen in this highly representative and interesting exhibition, but these artists are all too well known to require any further comment.



FLORIDA, from the sportsman's point of view, is the home of the tarpon. If the tarpon had a say in the matter, it would be to the effect that he was by no means restricted to Florida, and that he inhabits waters hundreds of miles from there. If a truthful tarpon,

he would also admit that nowhere else did he attain to such a weight, or afford so much sport. The prospective tarpon fisher need entertain no doubts as to where he will fish; such may be at once dismissed by the single statement that, so far as is at present known, there is but one desirable spot on all the West Coast of Florida, and no more than that on the east; but with these disadvantages in the latter case: There is no accommodation there, unless Hughes has had his floating hotel transferred from Boca Grande, for otherwise a yacht is indispensable, and although there the tarpon are earlier in the season, and very numerous, the sharks are so plentiful as to ruin sport. Hence, in spite of Bahia Honda being an excellent fishing ground, for

comfort and general convenience it does not compare with Charlotte Harbour, where two passes, known as Captiva and Boca Grande, constitute the desirable fishing grounds of Florida. These passes are six miles apart; situated on the small island of Usippa, between the two, is the only public habitation in the district. Usippa Inn, as it is modestly termed, is second to no Southern hotel in comfort, while its cuisine far surpasses that of the

great gay palaces of the fashionable watering-places along the coast, where the rank and fashion of America, in the latest Paris fashions, apparently enjoy badly cooked and unappetising dinners. Not so, however, at Usippa Inn. Here the hungry and often fatigued fisher can and will enjoy, unhampered by either coat or waistcoat, an excellent dinner, nicely cooked, and

well served. There need be no fashionable restraint on Usippa Island, where the hotel is run only in the interest of the fishers. Guides, boats, bait, in fact, all one needs, are provided, and a steam launch conveys the guests to either of the passes, and returns for them daily. In any case it would be only a row or sail of three miles, but the launch is a great convenience.

As the reader has now learned where to go, a few words as to the best means of arriving there may be appreciated. Taking into consideration the cost of sport, Florida fishing is probably the cheapest conceivable.

April and May are the two best months for fishing. Before April sport is poor, and after May the rainy season begins, and tarpon, although very plentiful and ravenous, are heavy with spawn and fight sluggishly. Hints as to crossing the Atlantic would be superfluous. The cheap winter rates of about £12 will still be on, but will be raised before the return trip.

If the fisherman has an old trout rod and a spinning rod with

some spoiled green and small salmon flies, he would do well to take them, for lady fish and so-called trout will often afford good sport from the shore with the fly, and many other varieties will succumb to the spinning rod, good fish up to ten or more pounds. All other tackle must be obtained from Vom Hofe, the celebrated tackle-maker of New York, who can be relied upon to provide what is necessary for tarpon fishing at a cost of about £16.

From New York there is the choice of train or steamer. By the former you book for Punta Gorda, *via* Jacksonville; it is usually a very hot and dusty journey of two days and a night. By boat it, of course, takes longer and costs half the money; you go first to Jacksonville, then take another boat to Lakeland, and thence, a few hours by train, to Punta Gorda. A steamer



J. Turner-Turner.

THE SPANISH MACKEREL.

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J. Turner-Turner. THE PASS APPEARS ALIVE WITH TARPON.

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leaves Punta Gorda each morning for Usippa Island, a journey of about three hours. The expenses at Usippa Island

are from 12s. per day for board and lodging; 20s. per day for man, boat, bait, and man's luncheon. Rooms should be engaged by letter, addressed Usippa Inn, Usippa Island, Punta Gorda. Some persons prefer to hire and live on a yacht, which has few advantages, and such disadvantages as heat, and constant doubt as to the existence of food on board.

For clothing, the least and thinnest is preferable—just a shirt, trousers, and bathing shoes; anything more than this is unnecessary. If you can handle a rod it will help you a little in tarpon fishing; for the rest, your boatman and the first tarpon you hook will prove invaluable, only look out that the reel does not break your fingers or the line cut them to the bone. Failing these two possibilities, you have only to hang on, reel in where possible, and thoroughly enjoy the mighty leaps, especially when your fish jumps into someone's boat—a frequent occurrence.

When it was stated that Charlotte's Harbour was the only place for tarpon fishing, the old-fashioned method of still fishing, what we should call bottom fishing, was ignored; this, of course, takes place more or less in suitable spots along the coast, and is poor, dreary work, engaged in by the class of sportsmen who still stick to black powder in preference to nitros. The still fisher and black powder man should be hung on the same peg and dusted occasionally. The boatman who takes you fishing is known as a guide, and his pay, high as it may appear, is well earned. He will take you where you please at any time of night or day, but if you use him all day you must not expect him to do night work as well. The guide is an all-important personage, upon whom

his salmon fly, in the act of casting, hangs up in a tree behind him. Eight fish beached to a single rod is a



J. Turner-Turner.

GUIDE LANDING A TARPON.

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become in tarpon fishing that all smaller game is neglected, which seems a pity, for fine sport is plentiful with a light rod

mostly depends the success of the day.

Fishing hours are regulated by the tides, which in their turn are seemingly uncontrolled by anything. In Boca Grande Pass it is necessary to fish about 40ft. deep with a lead, but in Captiva, by far the most sporting of the two, no lead at all is necessary; the bait, a 7in. strip of mullet, or, still better, a small whole fish, is trolled close to the surface, until it is suddenly seized with a wrench capable of tearing a loosely-held rod from the hands. Instantly a hundred pounds or so of silvery fish dashes into the air, and if hooked, which is unlikely, the fisher will enjoy a busy twenty minutes before he lands his tarpon splashing upon the shell-strewn beach.

Tarpon when present usually show up, playing in schools. It is the guide's business to locate these, and row in front of them until the fisher gets a pull; and, goodness, what a pull it is!—no coming short, or doubtful drag, but just the sort of pull a man gets when up, playing in schools. It is the guide's business to locate these, and row in front of them until the fisher gets a pull; and, goodness, what a pull it is!—no coming short, or doubtful drag, but just the sort of pull a man gets when

although it can be exceeded. It means, perhaps, forty pulls, and a lot of apparently hooked fish lost, for this gigantic herring has a bone-clad mouth, well adapted to resist the hook. A 160lb. tarpon is a good fish, and worth keeping if a trophy is desired. The record tarpon weighed 213lb. fair weight, and was not stuffed with bullets, as a previous record fish is said to have been.

So absorbed do most persons



J. Turner-Turner.

SHARK FISHING.

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with fish from 40lb. down to two or three. For instance, first in size comes the king fish, a great 40lb. mackerel, much stronger for its size than the tarpon. This fish takes real or artificial bait freely, and before being hooked can jump 20ft. above the water. Then a near relation, the Spanish mackerel, is strong, plentiful, and sporting. Also another connection of the latter is known as jack fish, weighing up to 15lb. The trout, so called from his appearance, is a good sporting fish; and last, but by no means least, except in size, is the most sporting of all, namely, the slim, silvery lady fish, noted for its jumping powers and general sporting nature, even to taking the fly freely, which, in certain places, can be cast from the shore.

Sharks are usually looked upon as vermin, but, as a variation in the routine of sport, are not altogether despicable. Much fun and hard work may be enjoyed sitting on the beach at one end of a strong line, with a large hook at the other, baited with a chunk of tarpon. Presently a few yards of line crawls out, then the pace increases, and you jump up, giving a mighty hank at the line. Should you have hooked a fourteen footer, you and your guide will have your work cut out to hold the fish and still keep out of the sea yourselves. These monsters are plentiful, and can always be caught in May, or earlier, often as quickly as the line is rebaited. It is interesting to open them in search of treasure. The one in the picture contained a lot of young and a few beef bones.

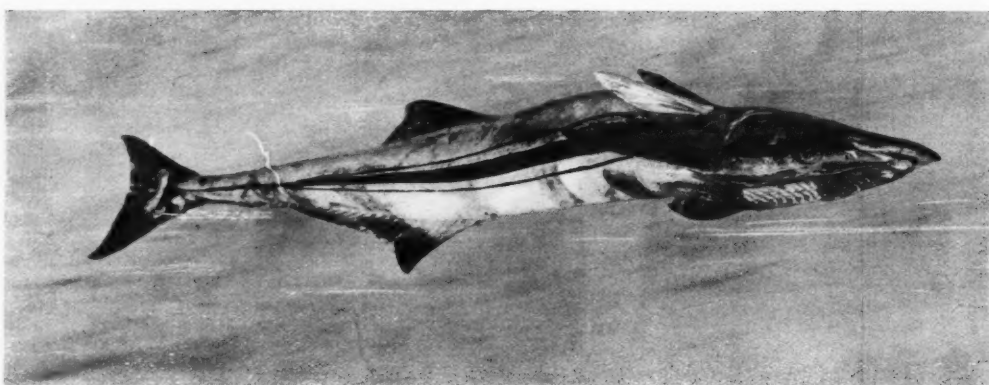
Sharks, like all the big fish of these waters, are bothered by suckers, a curious fish which adheres by suction to its host through an apparatus on the top of its head resembling a Venetian blind. The one depicted was 3ft. long, and momentarily left a shark to indulge in a tarpon bait. They have no objection to sticking to a man's legs when they find them in the water. It is interesting to watch the great leaps of the sharks as, spinning in the air, they throw off like spray a score of suckers, and then dash away before the astonished little parasites can catch up with them.

J. TURNER-TURNER.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE EARLY PIPISTRELLE.

THE pipistrelle is always, I think, the first of our bats to venture abroad in the early year; and he is the more easily recognised then because he flies so often by daylight. Sometimes when you come upon him, on a sunny afternoon in March, hawking for flies under a clump of trees, you can, by taking up a judicious position under his line



J. Turner-Turner.

A 3ft. SUCKER.

Copyright.

of flight, at the point where he passes from the shade of one tree to that of another, see how prettily transparent his wings are against the sky; and, if the sun is shining, you may even notice the red tinge which the network of tiny blood-vessels gives to the stretched membrane. At night you see none of the beauty of a bat, though you may admire his skilful swoops and dashes, and hear the snap of his little jaws as he takes the flying moth. In the daytime, however, you can see his tiny, dog-like face, with its bright eyes turning quickly from this side to that, and note the gleam of his white needle-teeth as he seals the fate of a passing gnât.

WHY BATS FLY BY DAY.

This year has not been a favourable one so far for seeing bats by daylight, because the wind has remained persistently in the west. For it is no matter of choice, but of necessity, that the bat sometimes comes abroad by daylight. When the north wind blows the weather is generally so cold that the bat can remain at home asleep by day and night, and when the wind is in the south or west he flies by night, because plenty of insects are then abroad. The touch of the east wind, however, sends all the insects into shelter. The moth collector knows as well as the bat that it is of little use turning out at night in spring when the wind is in the east. Yet there are often times when, in spite of an east wind, the sun is bright and strong, and in sheltered places the air is delightfully warm. It reaches the bat in his snug crevice and wakes him thoroughly; but so soon as the sun sets the chill influence of the east wind prevails and there are no insects. Next day, when the bat is wideawake in the warmth again, he is very hungry; so out he comes and hawks for flies in a world of birds.

ROBIN *versus* BAT.

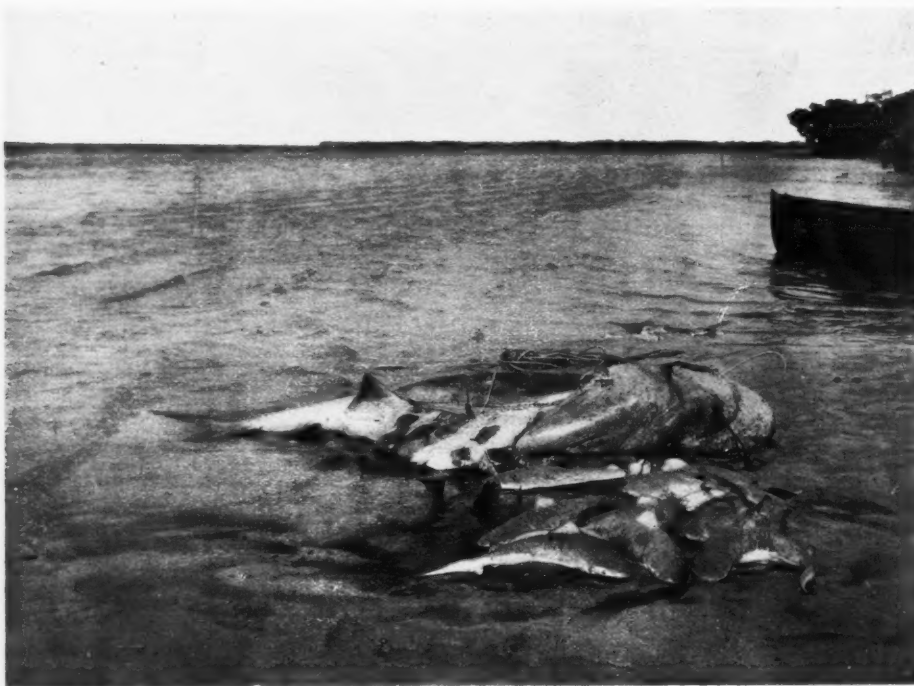
These treat him with forbearance, with the exception of the robin, because he is not interfering with their supply of food. When the warblers, flycatchers, and swallows have come, it might be different, because they all catch insects on the wing; and the hostility of the robin towards the bat may be the result of an instinctive knowledge that their interests clash also to some extent. The robin often exhibits a pretty knack of catching flies; and if you get up at dawn in the summer you will sometimes see him chasing the bats to bed. For in the robin we see, I think, a bird which is gradually changing its habits and becoming crepuscular like the bats. When in the gathering dusk of evening you can just catch sight of a small bird that flits silently and suddenly across your path, you may be almost sure that it is a robin; and in the grey of dawn it is the robin that gets up before your feet from the roadside. Already, too, the robin owes a good deal of its beauty to its large, full eyes, indicating power of vision in such scanty light as would render, say, canaries, with their little, beady eyes, practically blind.

WATCHING THE INDIVIDUAL.

There must be more meaning in birds' politics than appears on the surface, because they often reproduce the same incidents at similar seasons and under similar conditions year after year. You cannot always notice this, because individual birds of the same kind are usually so much alike that you do not recognise them from one season to another, and you scarcely learn more about them than about the human units of the crowd that passes in a London street. Sometimes, however, looking out of the window, you may notice a man with some peculiarity which you noted going in the same direction or doing the same thing as when you saw him last. Presently, perhaps, you notice that he is always there on the same day of the week, and at once your interest is excited, because "there must be a reason for it," you say to yourself. Perhaps by watching that man you get a glimpse of the peculiar life of some strange class of men. So, when by chance an individual bird is marked off by some personal difference from the feathered mob which haunts your garden, and you discover a regular periodicity in its actions, you are interested at once, and hope to discover some of the secrets of its mode of life.

A BALD-HEADED BLACKBIRD'S HABITS.

The foregoing remarks have been suggested by the disappearance, for the fourth year



J. Turner-Turner. SPORT IN OTHER LANDS: ELEVEN YOUNG SHARKS. Copyright

in succession at this season, of our bald-headed blackbird. I have mentioned this wretched creature before. She has no vestige of a feather on any part of her head and neck, and each year she becomes more speckled about the body with white. All through the winter she dominates a certain lawn and bird-table, displaying a villainous temper which accords with her vulturine aspect. Very early in the year, however, another hen blackbird appears and refuses to be driven off. She does not exactly oppose the bald-headed one, but simply evades her angry rushes, and always remains on or near the lawn. For three successive years I *think* that this second bird has been the same individual, because she has more ruddy feathers on the throat than is usual in hen blackbirds. About the same time a gorgeous cock blackbird arrives on the same lawn, but there is nothing to show that he is the same bird from year to year. But the three always go through the same pantomime. The bald-headed one pursues the other hen all over the place, and the male brings up the rear, hopping along as if he were interested in the matter but did not like to interfere.

SOME QUICK CHANGES AND EXIT.

After a time the bald-headed virago changes her tactics somewhat, and between her hot pursuits of the other makes advances to the cock blackbird. At first I thought that she was endeavouring to drive him away too, but, after seeing the performance many times, concluded that, although she hops rapidly after him, there is no menace in her attitude. Even if it is blandishment, however, the cock resents it vigorously sometimes, and charges at her most ungallantly. Presently another sudden and, at first, very unexpected

which evidently grow from bulbs of some sort, but have no sign of a flower. Then the leaves die down and, later in the year, when you have forgotten all about them, clumps of handsome reddish purple flowers, like large crocuses, come straight out of the ground. These are known as meadow saffron or autumn crocus; and there must be a reason, of course, for the marked contradiction in habits between them and the coltsfoot. Why does the latter produce only flowers in spring, and only leaves later, while the saffron is leafy in spring and has leafless flowers in autumn? The difference is explained probably by the fact that they have learned to grow in exactly opposite kinds of situations.

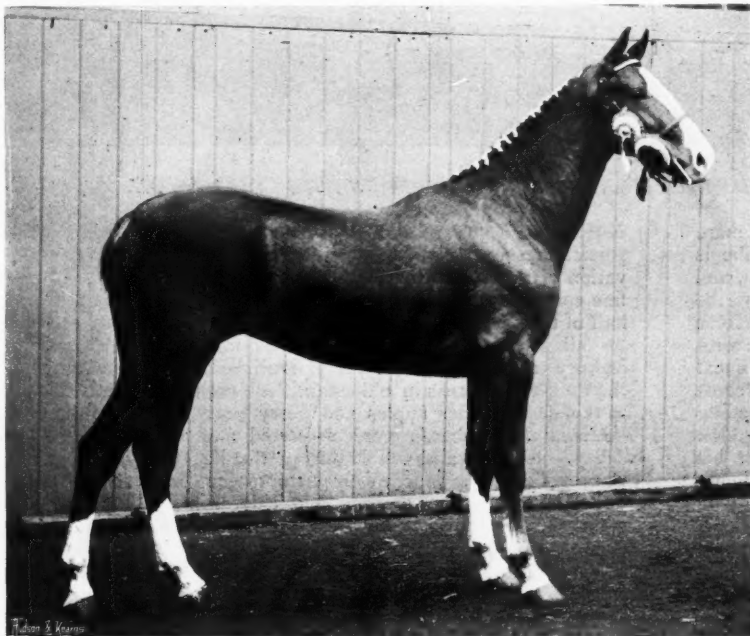
DANGERS OF DROUGHT AND FLOOD.

The coltsfoot in poor, gravelly soil has to place its roots very deep, and during summer, when the gravel is baked and hard, the long thin flower stems would hardly force their way to the surface, so it sends them up at the time of year when even the gravel is always soft and soaked. The "autumn crocus," on the other hand, if it flowered with the real crocuses in early spring, would run the risk each year of having its flowers drowned and spoilt by the floods of the early year, when such soil as it affects is usually half under water. If it flowered in summer its 3in. blooms would be smothered under the rank herbage. Not till this has died down do the purple flowers thrust themselves up to the light, because then they have both a clear field and a dry season. Whether this is the real explanation of the matter or not, it lends an added interest to the appearance of the bright coltsfoot flowers on our gravel banks in spring and the handsome meadow saffron blossoms in the low-lying pastures in autumn, if one is able to give any reason for their contradictory peculiarities. E. K. R.

FROM THE FARMS.

TWO PRIZE HACKNEYS.

THE increased interest taken in Hackneys is abundantly shown by the popularity of the Hackney Show. This year's was the largest exhibition of the kind that has ever been recorded. The total number of entries amounted to 543, as against the previous highest total of 495. In fact, it has become almost unmanageably large, and the four days of judging which it exacts proved to be somewhat tedious; but the quality of the animals exhibited is very high indeed, although some critics were of opinion that this year it was rather more uneven than it has been on previous occasions. We give photographs here of two of the most notable Hackneys shown. Mr. Galbraith's Administrator is a three year old, who already has a long list of victories to his credit, having won firsts at the Royal, the Highland, Glasgow, and Royal Lancashire Shows. Last year, in the two year old class, he was second to Danegelt Royal. He is by Garton Duke of Connaught and won first in his class very easily, though in the championship there were some who considered that the reserve, Mr. Haley's Danegelt Royal, was as good as the winner. The championship award given to Mr. de Mancha's Bashful Kate was not received *nemine contradicente*, but she is a fine quality mare, by Rosador out of a Rufus mare. Except for



Copyright CHAMPION HACKNEY MARE, BASHFUL KATE. "C.L."

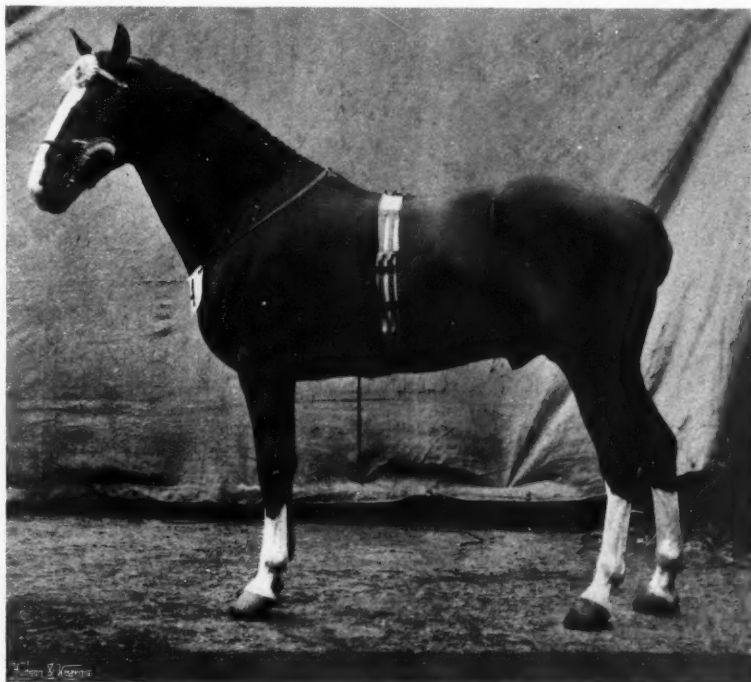
change takes place. The younger hen—for it is reasonable to suppose that the bald-headed one is an ancient bird—turns upon her pursuer one day, and hunts her clean out of the garden, to which she does not return until the following autumn! Once, some days after she had been driven out, the bald-head was seen flying out of a neighbouring hedge; but, with this exception, she seems to disappear completely from early spring until late autumn.

AN INTERESTING PROBLEM.

Presumably she migrates; but, if so, what is the meaning of the pantomime which goes on every year before her departure? One can only suppose that the younger pair—though unfortunately they cannot be identified with certainty—are the rightful owners of a nesting-site which includes the right to use that lawn; that they migrate southwards for the winter; and that when they come back in the early spring it takes some time for the younger hen to screw up her courage to drive the bald-headed winter lodger away. The male could, of course, do it any day; but he leaves it to his wife as a matter for her sex. If we could find out where this bald-headed blackbird spends each summer, we might obtain a valuable clue to the average distance that these birds migrate. If any reader has seen this bald-headed blackbird in the North or in Norway, I should be glad to hear. There could hardly be any mistake as to her identity; for a blackbird with no feathers at all on head or neck and also a sprinkling of white feathers on her body must be almost unique.

A CONTRAST IN PLANT CONDUCT.

In the early year the coltsfoot brightens gravel heaps, railway cuttings, and other lean and stony sites, with bright flowers which are not unlike dandelions, but of a purer yellow. Their peculiarity is, however, that they are thrust out of the poor ground on long stems without a sign of a leaf anywhere. Later in the year, when you have forgotten all about the yellow flowers, the old gravel heap or railway cutting becomes covered in patches with large rounded leaves, whose fancied resemblance in shape to the hoof-print of a small horse has given the coltsfoot its name. In low, moist meadow-land, on the other hand, at this season you may see tufted clumps of large glossy green leaves,



Copyright CH. HACKNEY STALLION, ADMINISTRATOR. "C.L."

being somewhat light in rib and loins, little fault could be found with her, and her action is all that could be desired. Of course, as time goes on, criticism becomes much more exacting; but too much importance should not be paid to those who objected to these awards. It would be very difficult to make a choice that would please everybody, now that the Hackney breed has been raised to such a very high point of perfection. As a pursuit for farmers we somewhat doubt Hackney breeding being profitable, except under specially favourable conditions. On a farm it is impossible to obtain sufficient work out of a Hackney to compensate for the cost of maintenance, and Shire horses seem the natural livestock where agriculture is carried on. It is greatly to be regretted that the decision of the judges should have been so badly received. The crowd had apparently arrived at the conclusion that Queen of the South ought to have won, and in the parade she was cheered, while Bashful Kate was hooted. Decision is, no doubt, very difficult, but loyalty to a judge should be rigorously observed.

TWO NOTABLE SHIRES.

This week we give portraits of two of the most interesting Shires exhibited at the recent London show. The Shire mare Solace, 24,787, was bred by the King at Sandringham. She is by Lord Arthur out of Madame Albani, by Prince William, and belongs to Lord Rothschild, Tring Park, Herts. She won the champion prize for mares or fillies at the London Shire Horse Show. She is almost a perfect type of the Shire horse, with beautiful feathered feet and faultless legs, and she moves almost like a Hackney. Birdsall Menestrel, belonging to the same owner, is a most exceptional Shire stallion. In our preceding number we gave his pedigree as being by the great stallion Menestrel, out of Birdsall Darling, by Northwood. For his years, there is probably no more typical Shire stallion living at the present moment. Both his legs and his top are as good as they could possibly be, and with the most ordinary luck he will next year bring about a reversion of the positions held respectively by him and Stroxtom Tom. This, be it said, is not to convey any reflection upon the splendid stallion belonging to Messrs. Forshaw, but he is not as young as he once was, and, as the old saying has it, "youth will not be denied."

HOW TO PRUNE APPLE TREES.

The work done by County Councils in the way of giving outdoor education is in many cases of extraordinary value, and are now concerned with a special education applied in a particular



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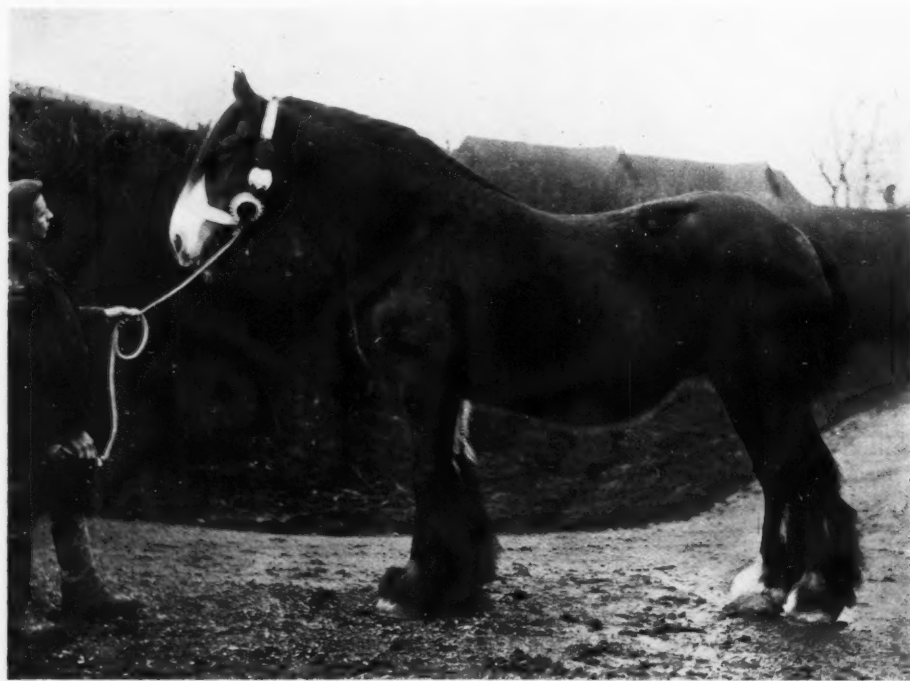
"C.L."

district to an important industry, namely, Herefordshire, where particular attention has been paid to fruit cultivation and the renovation of orchards. This county was formerly so celebrated for the fine condition of its orchards that Dr. Beale, writing in the latter half of the seventeenth century, declared that they were a pattern for all England. At that date and until the middle of last century trade in cider and perry flourished, and in consequence the bulk of the trees in old-established orchards mostly consist to this day of cider apples and perry pears, but when the trade declined the orchards were neglected and the trees fell into decay. It has again revived during the last few years, and the County Council is very wisely encouraging the teaching of the practice required in orchard and cider mill. The procedure adopted is as follows: Say the lesson is to be on pruning, the instructor begins by pruning a tree or bush himself, explaining to his class the reasons for what he does, asking them what they would do, and inviting questions and suggestions from them. He then sets his class to work under his supervision. The Herefordshire County Council has lately obtained the use of six pomological stations in different parts of the county, where open-air demonstrations are also given by the instructors in various branches of fruit culture. The last examination for this season was one on pruning, held recently on the estate of Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, the chairman of the agricultural sub-committee.

Fourteen candidates from all parts of the country presented themselves. The forenoon was occupied in pruning young standard trees, and the afternoon in pruning orchard trees of older and larger growth, while the day's proceedings were brought to a close by the pruning of bush fruit. Mr. T. S. Wright, the superintendent of the Horticultural Gardens at Chiswick, who was the examiner, expressed himself as highly gratified with the character of the work done, and reported that, taking the class as a whole, it was the best he had ever examined.

THE PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL PARCEL POST.

Lady Warwick has come to the aid of Mr. Rider Haggard in trying to get an agricultural parcel post established. No one, we think, will dispute the usefulness of this service if its establishment were found to be practicable. But on that side we have not heard much discussion. There are two circumstances that render an agricultural post very difficult to carry out. It would have to deal with packages of considerable bulk, and there would be some trouble in collecting them in the town, as the present arrangement for the parcel post is not



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CHAMPION SHIRE MARE SOLACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

quite strong enough. It would be still more difficult to distribute them in the country. An agricultural parcel post would naturally be of most use in the most out-of-the-way farms and hamlets and farm-places. Now at these the delivery of letters is not very efficient at the present moment, and the delivery of large parcels would require a new service altogether. Usually in rural districts, now, the postman is accommodated with a light gig or dog-cart, in which he travels to his furthest point. Then he stables his horse and delivers letters and parcels on foot. If he had weightier packages and more of them, a different vehicle would also be required, and probably two horses instead of one. There is no insuperable difficulty in this, but, all the same, it would increase the expense of collection and delivery to such a degree that we doubt if the rates at present in vogue could be even approximately maintained.

SCRATCHING-SHEDS FOR POULTRY.

The success attending the recent laying competition has called forth enquiry as to the construction and management of the scratching-sheds, to which a large measure of this success is attributed. That the system is far in advance of the field-house or colony system there is no doubt. Broadly, it consists of a combined roost and shelter under one roof, and is of sufficient size to enable the birds to be confined thereto during wet weather without over-crowding. The idea, in a simple way, is not new to many of our cottagers, but it was left to the Americans to exploit it on a large scale, and so the method is called the American scratching-shed system of housing poultry. There are several types of these sheds, but the principles, more or less elaborated, are similar. A dry footing at all times, abundance of fresh air without draught, room for exercise, admission of sunlight to the furthestmost point, and minimising of labour are the great features aimed at. The structure consists of a well-roofed edifice, closed at three sides, and open to the most favourable aspect. Under this the birds roost and work for their living, being allowed out on the grass runs in fair weather only.

Taking the laying competition sheds as typical, the following

details may be noticed. There are two slopes to the roof, a long one to the rear covered with wood and two layers of roofing-felt, and a short one to the front facing south covered with glass, which is removable, and, while admitting light to the interior, shelters the attendant's corridor (which is wired off), and keeps out driving rain from the litter-covered floor. The heights approximately are 4ft. at the back, 9ft. at the apex, and 7ft. at the front. In some types the corridor does double duty, having shelters on either hand for different pens of birds. The sides and back are of wood reaching to the ground, and exits are provided by which the inmates gain access to the grass runs, extending, in this case, one hundred yards in front and behind. The perches are under the longer slope, and are so made that they can be moved forward in mild weather, and retired with the advent of severe frost. Under the perches a wide droppings board is fastened, which is brushed off daily. The earthen floor is strewn with a litter which may be composed of bracken, straw, shavings, etc., and in wet weather exercise is enforced by scattering in this part of the corn ration, thus keeping the birds in good fettle. The constants to be observed are, ten square feet of scratching surface per bird, and 10 in. of perch room. During heavy drifting snow, light canvas is stretched along the wire front to act as a snow-blind; and in summer the glass frames of the corridors are slid down, or removed entirely, till the following autumn. The nests (to be American they should, of course, be trap-nests) obtrude into the attendant's corridor, and by raising the lids the poultryman is able to see which contain eggs or laying birds.

There is not much in these details but what might be copied by any lover of poultry. The necessity for elaborate and expensive structure does not become an essential factor. A cart or cattle shed, wired off to keep the birds in when requisite, would answer the purpose as well as the most palatial edifice. Fowls are birds that have an intense dislike to wet feet and feathers, also to stuffy, ill-lighted roosting quarters, which breed vermin and disease.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WAYSIDE TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was extremely glad to see in the last issue of your journal a timely protest made against the action of those local bodies who are threatening to interfere with wayside trees. The highway after all exists as much for the pedestrian as it does for those who travel in carriage or on bicycles, and there are few who trust to Nature's method of locomotion who would not have the fullest sympathy with your view. The wayside tree is a beautiful object when freely planted; it lends a sylvan appearance to the country that would otherwise be bare and desolate. It provides shade in summer; no slight blessing, as those will admit who have walked any distance along a road destitute of trees, with the rays of a July sun beating down on them. It is also a much-needed shelter from storms. A plea has been put forward that the wayside tree takes too much out of agricultural land, but the practical farmer knows that the return compensates for the loss. In fact, where wayside trees are not plentiful, it has been found necessary to plant clumps in the middle of fields. Even for such a calling as poultry-keeping, well-planted trees, that will break the force of the more violent north-easterly gales, are found necessary, especially in the North. We have to remember, too, that a tree may be cut down in an hour, but that it takes ages to attain its full size and maturity. I trust, therefore, that you will use all the influence of your paper to withstand this movement in favour of reducing the country-side to a state of desolation.—A.

MALFORMATION OF TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—May I be allowed to suggest to your correspondent "J. H." one or two reasons for the apparent malformation of some of the plane trees along or fronting on Park Lane. In the first place "J. H." is probably aware that all these trees, though probably planted at least sixty or seventy years ago, were, after the Reform riots in 1866, when the railings were broken down, all moved back or transplanted in order to widen Park Lane. I hardly suppose, however, that that transplanting has had much to do with the apparent malformation of some of them, though it may have been to a certain extent the cause of their growth being checked. What I believe to be the case, however, with this particular line of trees is that they consist of the two different varieties of plane trees—viz., *Platanus orientalis* and *Platanus occidentalis*, these being placed for some distance alternately with each other. My idea is that the *Platanus occidentalis* is probably a more delicate tree and not so well adapted to the English climate and to the London smoke as its relative the more hardy *Platanus orientalis* (the plane tree seen now over all London) and that for this reason the trees of the *occidentalis* variety are more stunted in their growth and have this malformation of the bole.—AN OCCASIONAL READER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—You will probably have received other replies to the enquiry in your last issue as to the cause of the boles on the plane trees in Park Lane, and probably they will have supplied more accurate data than I can give. But, having been a resident in that neighbourhood, I have observed these trees for many years, and have watched the abnormal growth of their boles since they

first commenced to occur. It will be in the recollection of many of your readers that after the Hyde Park railings were destroyed, some five-and-twenty or more years ago, they were replaced by the present railings, and the opportunity was taken of widening Park Lane to its present proportions. It was necessary for this purpose to move many of the plane trees further towards the west, and these were wrapped for several feet above the surface with hay-bands, which were allowed to remain for some two or more years. The effect upon a tree which annually sheds its bark has been to produce the boles now seen, and, as may also be seen by comparison with those not so treated, the growth of these trees has been checked, and the branches are stunted and dwarfed. The annual foliage of these trees is much less luxurious than that of their healthy neighbours, and the leaves are smaller and less abundant.—JOHN H. MORGAN, Athenæum Club.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reply to the letter from "J. H." in your issue of the 7th inst., I know the rugged boles of the plane trees in Park Lane quite well. About fifteen years ago I tried to ascertain the cause of the diseased growth, but unsuccessfully. I think, however, it arises from the trees having become bark-bound. These trees were moved and placed back after the riot when the Hyde Park railings were pulled down, and this check to their growth may have developed this form of excrescence. The soil, too, has been banked up over their roots—as your photograph shows—in a way which tends to affect injuriously the natural growth of the trees. The rugged bark of aged specimens of the "Old English," or "Black" poplar, is a more natural growth, and highly picturesque. There are, or were, one or two good specimens in the Green Park near Piccadilly, about half-way between Apsley House and Devonshire House. The various forms of bark of our forest trees are very interesting, and can be well studied in the London parks. It may not be amiss, in reference to the planes, to refer to a fact little known, but which, I think, Nicholson of Kew was the first to point out—namely, that the London planes are varieties of the Eastern and not the Western plane, as commonly supposed and stated.—J. L. P., Montreux, Switzerland.

A DUST-STORM IN ENGLAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Till your paragraph in "Country Notes" last week I had seen no mention in any paper of the dust-storm which occurred a week or two ago, though many people have written about the "red rain." Here—a little to the west of Southampton—it took place exactly as you describe it in Kent and Sussex. We thought there was a thick Scotch mist, till on going out we found the air dry, and every tree and shrub covered with fine pink dust, which continued to blow up in a thick mass from the south-west all the morning. When the sun tried to shine through it there was an uncanny pink light.—A. LA TERRIERE, Nursling, Hants.

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a picture of my long-maned horse Linus, which appeared in your beautiful paper, COUNTRY LIFE, of

February 28th, and for which I beg to return my sincere thanks. Permit me to say that it is over four years since the photograph was taken of which your picture was a reproduction. Since that time the mane and tail have both increased in length, till, at the present time, the tail measures about 17ft. and the double mane 13½ft.—E. H. BOSTOCK.

LACOCK ABBEY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As I did not see your description of Lacock Abbey before it went to press, may I be permitted to supplement your very interesting description on one or two points. It is a mistake, which has been often repeated, to attribute the surname Devereux to the old Earls of Salisbury. It appears to have arisen from a clerical error in Vincent's transcript from the Liber de Lacock, by which "le Ewrus" is, in one place, given as "de Ewrus," which afterwards came to be interpreted as de Evreux or Devereux. The designation "le Ewrus," which John Gough Nichols considered equivalent to "le Heureux" (the fortunate), attaches, I think, only to Walter Earl of Rosmar, ancestor of Ela Countess of Salisbury, Foundress and first Abbess of Lacock. The christian name of the Foundress, Ela Longespee, should be written with only one *l*. It is so spelled in all ancient manuscripts and on her gravestone. I believe that Sir William Sharrington has gained a much worse reputation than he really deserved. I do not think he entered into the plots of Lord Seymour of Sudeley, because he feared discovery of previous frauds. He appears to have been acting somewhat in the capacity of a steward to Seymour, who was himself a speculator in the lands of the dissolved monasteries. Under Seymour's influence, who insisted upon being furnished with money for his ambitious purposes, Sharrington perpetrated considerable frauds in connection with the Bristol Mint and was led into treason. No doubt he gave evidence against Seymour to save his own life, but the evidence was probably true. Latimer must have had some reason for speaking well of him, and, if he had been of a notoriously fraudulent character, he would hardly have been appointed, at a later date, one of the commissioners for receiving the purchase-money for the cession of *Boulogne* from the French King. I discountenance, as much as possible, the mythical story of the leap of Olive Sharrington. It appears to have sprung up in the time of Charles II. Aubrey says he heard it from Sir Robert Long, but does not say he believed it himself. There is no reason to suppose that Sir Henry Sharrington objected to his daughter's marriage. John Talbot, the eldest son of Ivory Talbot, did not *die unmarried*. He married, in 1742, Elizabeth, daughter of James Stone, Esq., of Badbury Manor, Wilts. She died in 1744, without issue. John Britton somewhere says that Dr. Davenport was a physician of Bath, but it is a mistake. He was a clergyman, a doctor of laws, and rector of Bredon, Worcestershire. His wife *Martha* was also his cousin. The name of the gentleman who resided at Lacock Abbey in 1825 was *Grosett*. It may perhaps be of interest to some of your readers to know that the chancel of Lacock Church, which is only a short distance from the Abbey, is being remodelled, by subscription, as a memorial to William Henry Fox Talbot.—C. H. TALBOT, Lacock Abbey.

CANINE CURIOSITY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—You may probably be interested in other than the purely sporting side of dogs' characters. The snap-shots sent herewith, showing various phases in the state of mind which is called in humans curiosity, are pretty characteristic of this side of dog life. On the whole, I think that a dog is about the most inquisitive of animals, though not all are alike in this respect. There is no doubt, for instance, that a fox-terrier has much more of an enquiring mind than a solemn old retriever. If you take a fox-terrier on a journey, and let him loose in a strange house or stable, he rushes all over the place, smelling everything, jumping on to furniture or boxes as the case may be, and trying to find out all there is to be learned in about two minutes. What is not so well known is the intense curiosity which fills the otherwise rather heavy and



THE FALL.



MEDITATION.

sedate minds of pointers. I would never allow one of mine in the house for this reason, and for one other, that though they have a short coat they have the strongest doggy smell of any breed we have. Their curiosity is like that of some people—it is indulged when they think they are alone. Let a pointer come into a dining-room and have a few minutes to himself, and he will soon stand up, put his muddy paws on the table-cloth, and inspect the breakfast-service. He will then go all round the table, standing up, putting his feet on it, and smelling the plates. Then he moves off to the sideboard, is upon his hind legs again, and patters all long it with his front paws. Next he wants to look at the mantel-piece, but by this time he is probably turned out.

Dogs always want to walk over newly-dug flower-beds to find out what has been going on. They likewise inspect new furniture, and will sometimes sit waiting outside a room into which a stranger has gone, merely to have the chance of rushing in and looking at him when the door opens.—J. B. C.

THE WAYS OF KESTRELS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The interesting notes on the "ways of kestrels," by "E. K. R.," in your issue of February 14th, recall to my mind an incident which I witnessed many years ago. A full-grown hen kestrel had been given to me, and finding on its arrival that one of its wings had been clipped, I turned it loose in an open yard, at the same time giving it some raw beef to eat. The house cat happened to come in, and at once eyed the kestrel with great interest. Evidently she was thinking that here was a fine opportunity for getting a dinner of two courses—bird first and beef to follow. As there was no cover from behind which she could stalk the bird, she first of all sat down to consider ways and means. There was a high wall near which the kestrel was feeding. The cat made for a point at the foot of the wall about 10ft. from the bird, and slowly crept towards it. When she had got about halfway the kestrel raised its head, and, turning one of its bold bright eyes on her, uttered a warning cry. The cat stopped at once, and, looking the

picture of innocence, pretended to be examining the wall with great interest, even going the length of sniffing at it. I think by this time she had realised that "bird" would have to be omitted from the menu, and that there would be some difficulty even as to the beef, which was rapidly disappearing down the kestrel's throat. However, she made another advance, and got within a few inches of her quarry. The kestrel now began to get angry; I could see the feathers on the top of its head flatten out, and its wings were raised slightly. The sight of the beef within such easy reach was too much for the cat; she put out her right paw and tried to claw it towards her. At the same moment down came the kestrel's left foot on the top of the paw with a scrunch, and her head was buffeted by its wings. Fortunately she shut her eyes. Both ladies used very bad language, and it was only with considerable difficulty that I managed to get the paw out of the kestrel's clutch. The cat slunk off, and gave it a wide berth for the future. Curiously enough, this same bird, though so bold in dealing with the cat, was afraid of a little tame owl, possibly owing to the fact that the latter happened to have lost its tail feathers, and so presented a very weird appearance. The eyesight of the kestrel is as keen as the grip of its talons is powerful. After the wing feathers of my bird had grown again it used sometimes to fly out of the garden and perch on the top of a round straw stack about 80yds. or 90yds. off; but I could always bring it back by holding up a small bit of raw meat. I once saw a wild kestrel swoop down on a flock of thirty or forty rooks, pass underneath them, and scatter them in all directions; they went off cawing loudly. I think in this case the kestrel must have struck one of them, for I noticed one rook turn a somersault, falling several feet. The kestrel, however, did not follow up its attack, but flew off quietly to a wood close by. On the other hand, I have several times seen a single rook chase a kestrel. Every time the kestrel tried to rise the rook would make a dash and prevent it. On another occasion I was fortunate enough to be within 3yds. or 4yds. of a kestrel when in the act of hovering. I was driving in a trap at the time; the bird was only a few feet from the ground, and I could see on to the top of its back. Though its body was stationary in the air, the wings were constantly quivering, and the head moved from side to side.—HOWARD GAYE.